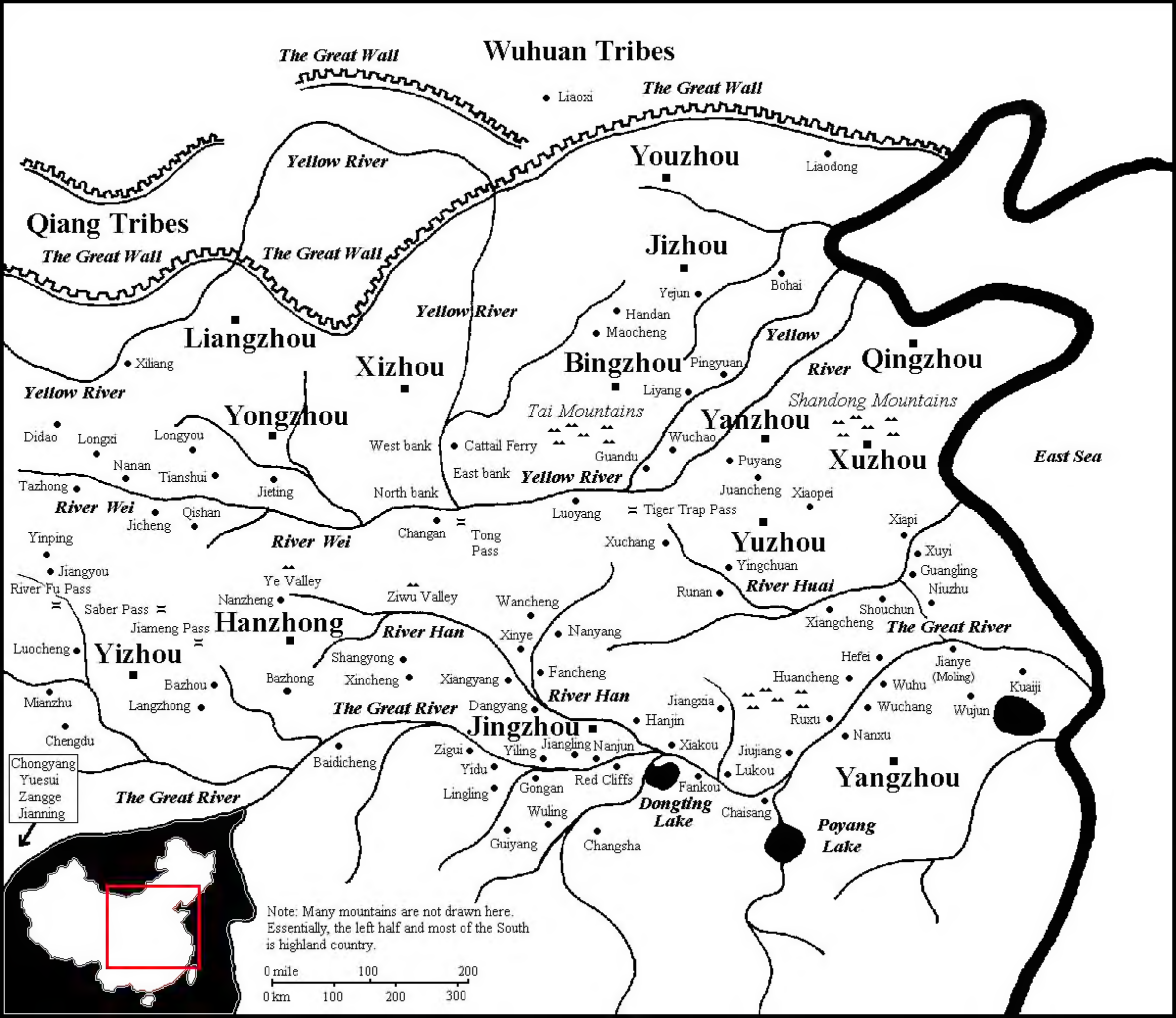
三国志 ⑨

曹操の台頭

横山光輝

希望コミックス 38


Wuhuan Tribes
The Great Wall
The Great Wall
Liaoxi
Youzhou
Liaodong
Yellow River
Qiang Tribes
The Great Wall
The Great Wall
Jizhou
Bohai
Yejun
Handan
Maocheng
Yellow River
Liangzhou
Xizhou
Bingzhou
Pingyuan
Yellow River
Qingzhou
Xiliang
Yellow River
Liyang
Shandong Mountains
Tai Mountains
Yongzhou
Yanzhou
Didao
Longxi
Longyou
West bank
Cattail Ferry
Wuchao
Guandu
Xuzhou
East Sea
Nanan
East bank
Yellow River
Puyang
Tianshui
Tazhong
Jieting
North bank
Juancheng
Xiaopei
River Wei
Qishan
Luoyang
Tiger Trap Pass
Jicheng
Changan
Tong Pass
Xiapi
Yuzhou
Yinping
River Wei
Xuchang
Xuyi
Jiangyou
Ye Valley
Yingchuan
Guangling
River Fu Pass
Ziwu Valley
Runan
River Huai
Niuzhu
Saber Pass
Nanzheng
Wancheng
Shouchun
Jiameng Pass
Hanzhong
River Han
Xinye
Nanyang
Xiangcheng
The Great River
Luocheng
Yizhou
Shangyong
Hefei
Jianye (Moling)
Fancheng
Huancheng
Bazhou
Bazhong
Xincheng
Xiangyang
Wuhu
Kuaiji
River Han
Jiangxia
Mianzhu
Langzhong
The Great River
Dangyang
Wuchang
Wujun
Ruxu
Hanjin
Jingzhou
Chengdu
Nanxu
Zigui
Yiling
Jiangling
Nanjun
Xiakou
Jiujiang
Baidicheng
Yidu
Lukou
Yangzhou
Chongyang
Yuesui
Zangge
Jianning
Red Cliffs
Fankou
Gongan
Lingling
Dongting Lake
Chaisang
Wuling
Poyang Lake
Guiyang
Changsha
The Great River
Note: Many mountains are not drawn here.
Essentially, the left half and most of the South
is highland country.
0 mile 100 200
0 km 100 200 300

CHARACTERS OF SANGOKUSHI
PART 1: CHARACTERS TO KEEP IN MIND

LIU BEI XUANDE:

THE CENTRAL CHARACTER OF SANGOKUSHI. HE IS A KIND AND VIRTUOUS MAN SAID TO BE THE DESCENDANT OF EMPEROR JING OF HAN. HE HAS SWORN AN OATH OF BROTHERHOOD WITH GUAN YU AND ZHANG FEI. AS OF VOLUME 8, HE HAS BECOME THE GOVERNOR OF PINGYUAN.

LIU BIAO:

THE GOVERNOR OF JINGZHOU WHO, ALONG WITH YUAN SHAO, TRIED TO KILL SUN JIAN TO RECOVER THE STOLEN IMPERIAL SEAL. HE SUCCESSFULLY THWARTED SUN JIAN'S ATTEMPTS TO TAKE JINGZHOU.

LU BU:

HE IS SAID TO BE THE STRONGEST WARRIOR IN THE LAND WHO RIDES ON THE FASTEST HORSE IN THE LAND, THE RED HARE. AS OF VOLUME 8, HE HAS BETRAYED HIS FORMER LORD AND FOSTER-FATHER, DONG ZHUO, BUT IS LEFT WITHOUT A TERRITORY OF HIS OWN. HE ATTEMPTS TO TAKE YANZHOU FROM CAO CAO.

SUN JIAN:

BORN IN WU COMMANDERY AND WAS THE GOVERNOR OF CHANGSHA. HE PARTICIPATED IN THE ALLIANCE TO BRING DOWN DONG ZHUO IN VOLUME 5. WHEN HE FOUND THE IMPERIAL SEAL, HIS ALLIES YUAN SHAO AND LIU BIAO ATTEMPTED TO KILL HIM TO RETRIEVE THE SEAL. IN VOLUME 7, HE TRIED TO EXACT HIS REVENGE BY ATTACKING LIU BIAO BUT WAS KILLED IN BATTLE.

SUN CE:

ELDEST SON OF SUN JIAN. PARTICIPATED IN HIS FATHER'S CAMPAIGN TO INVADE JINGZHOU.

SUN QUAN:

YOUNGER BROTHER OF SUN CE.

TEN ATTENDANTS:

A CORRUPT GROUP OF 10 EUNUCHS WHO WERE THE HIGHEST RANKING MINISTERS OF THE IMPERIAL COURT. THEY SUCCEEDED IN ASSASSINATING GENERAL HE JIN BUT WERE LATER KILLED BY HE JIN'S ARMY LED BY YUAN SHAO.

WANG YUN:

AN OLD MAN WHO HOLDS THE POST OF MINISTER OF THE MASSES, ONE OF THE 3 HIGHEST RANKING POSTS IN HAN. HE SUCCESSFULLY PLOTS DONG ZHUO'S DOWNFALL. HE IS LATER KILLED BY REMNANTS OF DONG ZHUO'S ARMY WHO INVADE CHANG'AN (UNSHOWN IN MANGA)

WEN CHOU:

HE AND YAN LIANG ARE YUAN SHAO'S TWO STRONGEST GENERALS.

YAN LIANG:

HE AND WEN CHOU ARE YUAN SHAO'S TWO STRONGEST GENERALS.

YUAN SHAO:

ORIGINALLY AN ADVISOR TO HE JIN, HE LEFT THE CAPITAL AND BECAME THE GOVERNOR OF BOHAI COMMANDERY WHEN DONG ZHUO CAME TO RULE OVER LUOYANG. HE HEADED THE ALLIANCE TO BRING DOWN DONG ZHUO AND TRIED TO KILL HIS ALLY SUN JIAN IN ORDER TO RECOVER THE STOLEN IMPERIAL SEAL.

YUAN SHU:

YOUNGER BROTHER OF YUAN SHAO AND THE GOVERNOR OF NANYANG. HE ASKS SUN JIAN TO HELP HIM ATTACK LIU BIAO AND HIS OLDER BROTHER IN VOLUME 7.

ZHANG FEI YIDE:

A FIERCE, SHORT-TEMPERED WARRIOR WHO IS THE SWORN YOUNGER BROTHER OF LIU BEI AND GUAN YU.

ZHAO YUN ZILONG:

A FORMER RETAINER TO YUAN SHAO BUT HE IS NOW UNDER GONGSUN ZAN'S SERVICE. HE WISHES TO BE LIU BEI'S RETAINER, HOWEVER.

-MORE TO COME IN FUTURE VOLUMES-

CHARACTERS OF SANGOKUSHI

PART 2: MINOR CHARACTERS

CAO HONG:

A GENERAL SERVING UNDER CAO CAO WHO IS ALSO HIS COUSIN. HE SAVED CAO CAO FROM CERTAIN DEATH IN VOLUME 6.

CAO SONG:

CAO CAO'S FATHER AND A FORMER GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL. IN VOLUME 8, HE WAS KILLED BY ZHANG KAI, AN ESCORT SENT BY TAO QIAN, WHO WANTED TO STEAL HIS FORTUNES.

CHENG GONG:

A CITY GUARD CAPTAIN WHO ARRESTED CAO CAO, ONLY TO FREE AND ESCAPE WITH CAO CAO AFTER SYMPATHIZING WITH HIS STORY. HE REGRETS HIS DECISION AFTER REALIZING CAO CAO'S CHARACTER. *IN THE ORIGINAL NOVEL, HE DEFECTS TO BECOME LU BU'S ADVISOR.

DING YUAN:

GOVERNOR OF BINGZHOU AND LU BU'S FOSTER-FATHER. HE OBJECTED TO DONG ZHUO'S SCHEME TO PLACE PRINCE CHENLIU AS THE EMPEROR OF HAN. HE WAS KILLED BY LU BU.

EMPRESS DOWAGER DONG:

FORMER EMPEROR LING'S MOTHER AND EMPEROR XIAN'S GRANDMOTHER. IN VOLUME 3, CONSORT HE ORDERED FOR HER DEATH IN ORDER TO SECURE HER SON LIU BIAN'S SEAT AS THE NEXT EMPEROR OF HAN.

HUA XIONG:

ONE OF DONG ZHUO'S GENERALS. HE DEFEATED SUN JIAN'S ARMY BUT WAS LATER KILLED BY GUAN YU IN VOLUME 5.

LADY FUYOU:

FICTIONAL CHARACTER CREATED BY MITSUTERU YOKOYAMA AND LIU BEI'S FIRST LOVE. ZHANG FEI FORMERLY SERVED HER FAMILY, WHO WERE ALL KILLED BY THE YELLOW TURBAN REBELS.

LIU BIAN:

THE SON OF CONSORT HE AND WAS BRIEFLY THE EMPEROR OF HAN AFTER EMPEROR LING'S DEATH. HE WAS DEPOSED BY DONG ZHUO AND LATER KILLED ALONG WITH HIS MOTHER BY LI RU.

LIU XIE (EMPEROR XIAN OF HAN):

FORMERLY KNOWN AS THE PRINCE OF CHENLIU, HE IS THE CURRENT EMPEROR OF HAN. HE BECAME THE EMPEROR WHEN DONG ZHUO FORCIBLY DETHRONED HIS HALF-BROTHER LIU BIAN.

TAO QIAN:

THE KIND GOVERNOR OF XUZHOU WHO ACCIDENTALLY ANGERED CAO CAO WHEN HIS DISLOYAL SUBORDINATE ZHANG KAI KILLED CAO CAO'S FATHER, CAO SONG.

ZHANG JIAO:

LEADER OF THE YELLOW TURBAN REBELLION. HE PASSED AWAY DUE TO ILLNESS IN VOLUME 3.

ZHANG BAO:

ZHANG JIAO'S YOUNGER BROTHER AND THE YELLOW TURBAN'S GENERAL OF THE LAND. HE WAS KILLED BY LIU BEI IN VOLUME 2.

-MORE TO COME IN FUTURE VOLUMES-

SANGOKUSHI

9

CAO CAO'S RISE TO POWER

CAO CAO MENGDE

YOKOYAMA MITSUTERU

SANGOKUSHI
(ROMANCE OF THE
THREE KINGDOMS)

三国志（さんごくし）

VOLUME 09
CAO CAO'S RISE TO POWER

THE LAND OF THE EARTH ELEMENT 199
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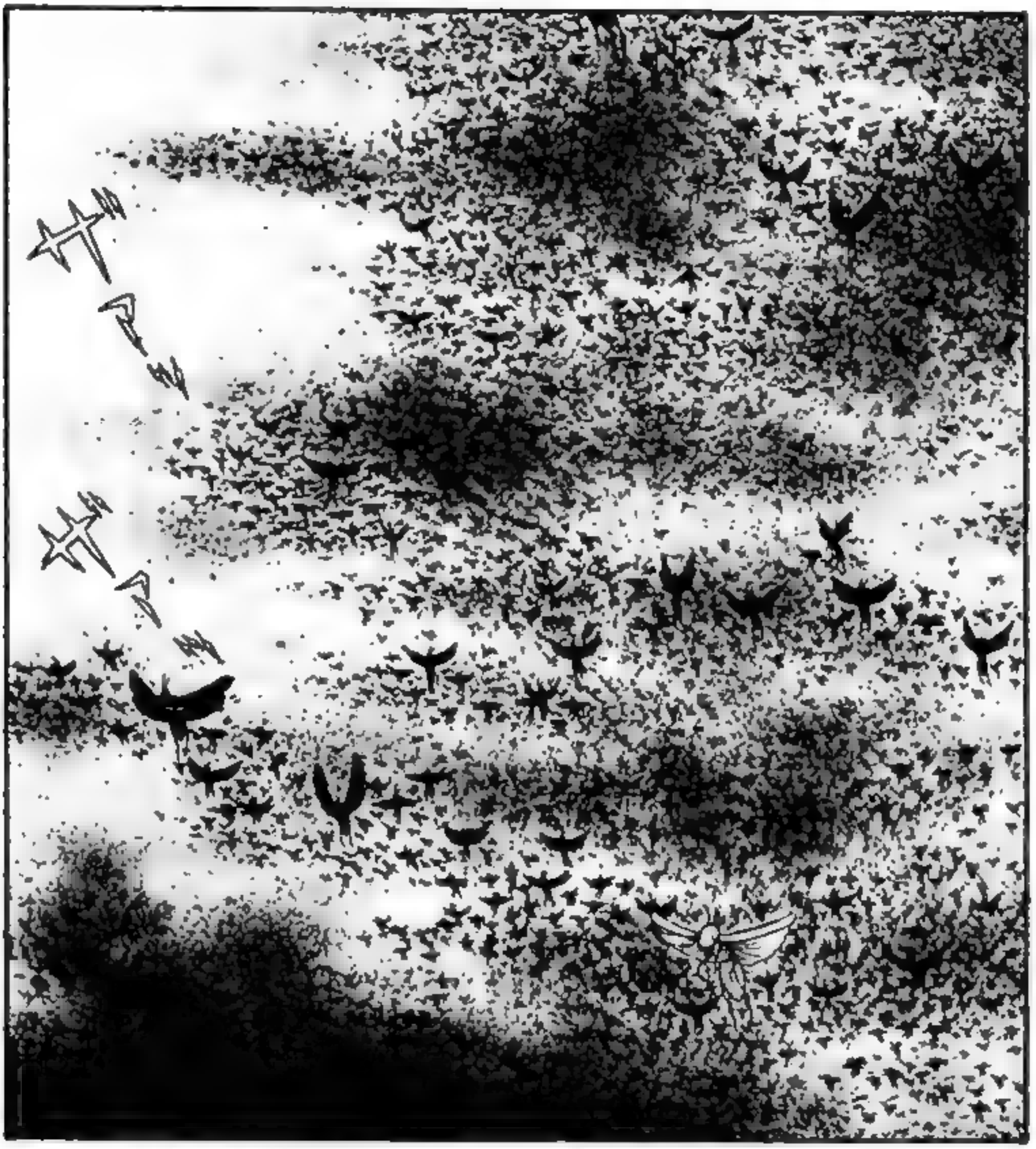
〔月刊『希望の友』掲載〕

LOCUSTS

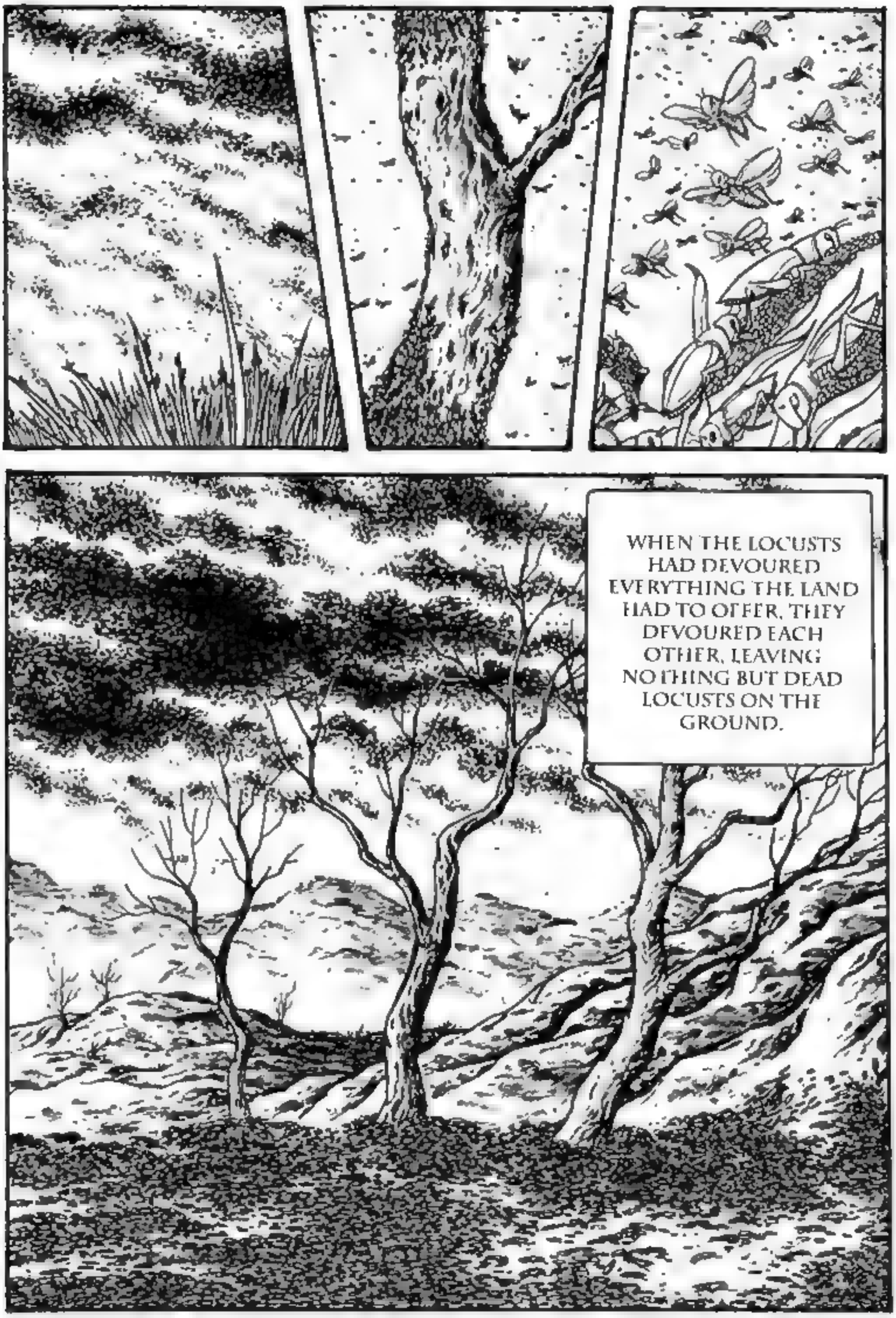


HIDE THE FOOD!

RUN FOR IT! THEY'LL DEVOUR EVERYTHING!

WHAT DO WE DO!?

THE COLOSSAL SWARM OF LOCUSTS BLOCKED ALL SUNLIGHT AND DEVOURED EVERY GREENERY IN SIGHT


WHEN THE LOCUSTS HAD DEVOURED EVERYTHING THE LAND HAD TO OFFER, THEY DEVOURED EACH OTHER, LEAVING NOTHING BUT DEAD LOCUSTS ON THE GROUND.

WHEN THE PEOPLE CAME OUT FROM THEIR HOMES TO DISCOVER NOT EVEN A SINGLE BLADE OF GRASS LEFT.
THEY WERE FORCED TO PACK UP THEIR BELONGINGS AND MOVE SOMEPLACE ELSE IN SEARCH FOR FOOD

二日

I'M AFRAID THAT THERE ISN'T A SINGLE GRAIN OF RICE TO BE FOUND IN THESE LANDS, MY LORD.

HAVE YOU BEEN ABLE TO OBTAIN ANY FOOD SUPPLIES AT ALL?

YES, I KNOW ALREADY.

THE SOLDIERS ARE ALL STARVING TO DEATH, SIR.

MY LORD, THERE IS NOTHING THAT MEN CAN DO AGAINST NATURAL CALAMITIES. I SUGGEST WE MOVE OUR FORCES TO ANOTHER REGION FOR THE TIME BEING.

HMM...

WITHOUT ANY FOOD, WE CANNOT CONTINUE THIS BATTLE.

I THINK JUANCHENG WOULD BE BEST, SIR

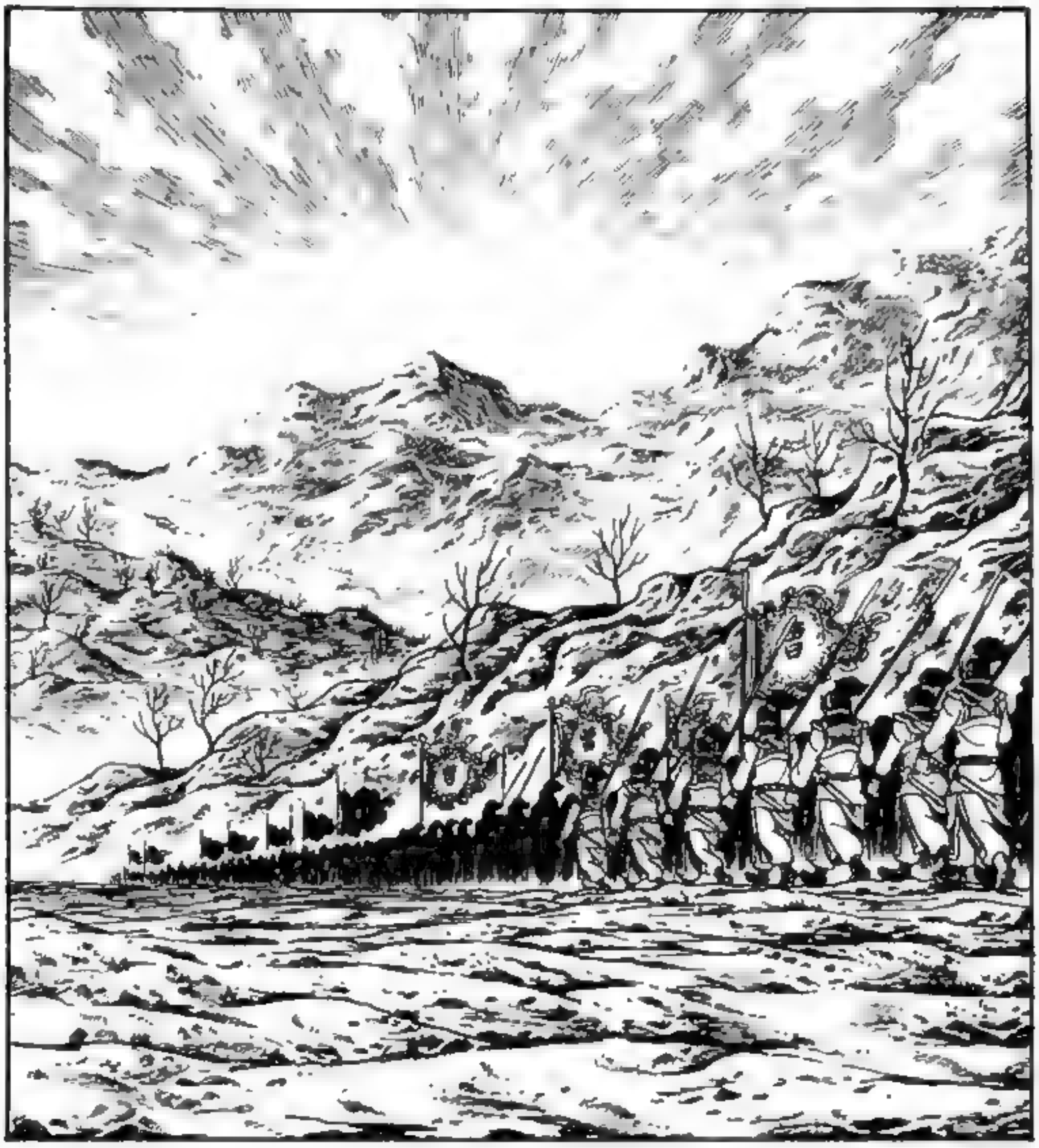
AND JUST WHERE DO YOU SUGGEST WE GO?

NOT ONLY WILL THIS FEED OUR SOLDIERS, BUT IT WILL ALSO WIN MY LORD THE SUPPORT OF THE PEOPLE AND PRAISE FROM THE IMPERIAL COURT.

THERE ARE STILL SOME REMNANTS OF THE YELLOW SCARVES AT JUANCHENG. WE SHOULD DEFEAT THEM TO STEAL THEIR FOOD SUPPLIES.

ALRIGHT, LET US DEPART FOR JUANCHENG!

KILLING 3 BIRDS WITH 1 STONE...? GOOD.



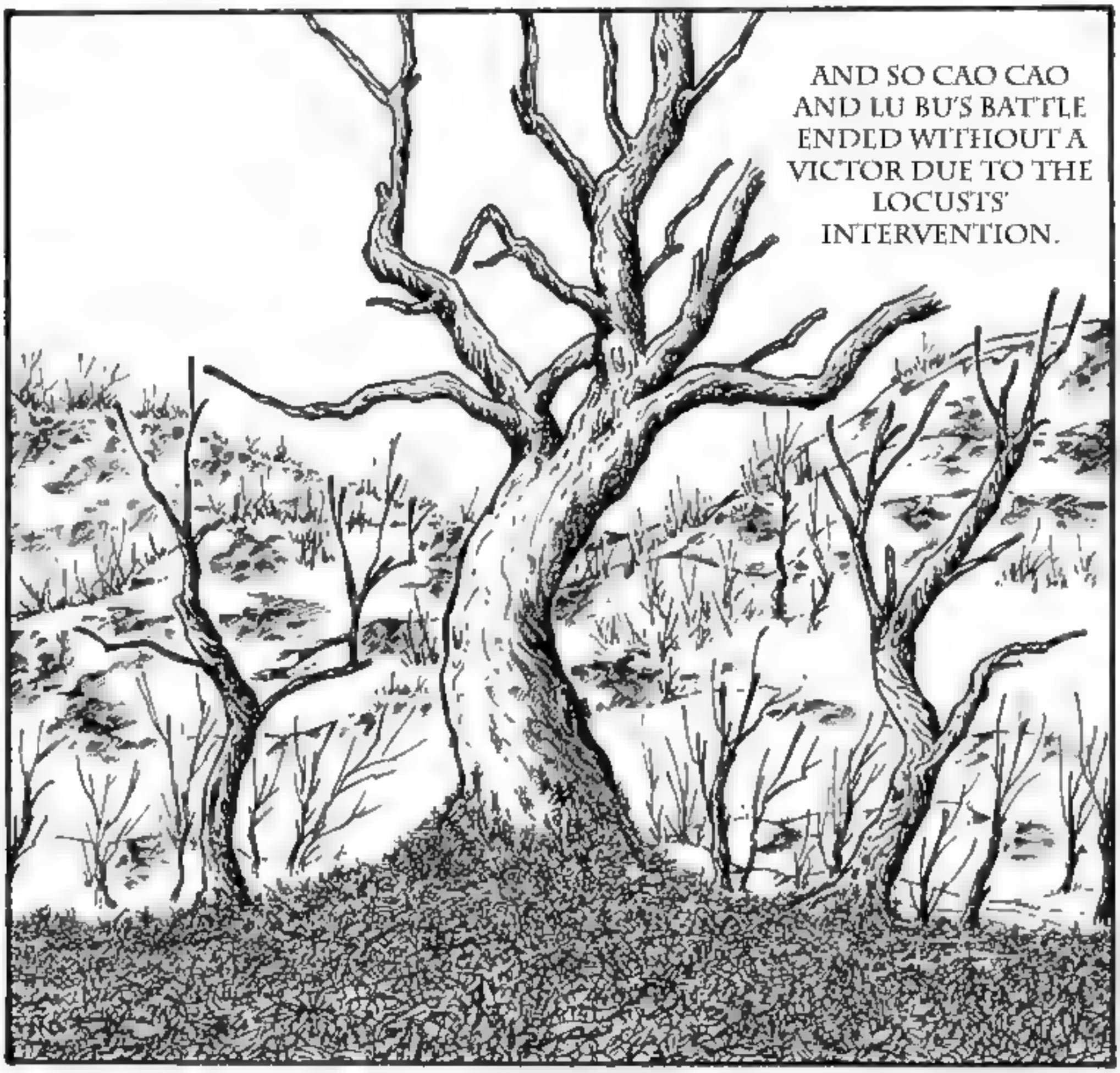
YES, SIR.

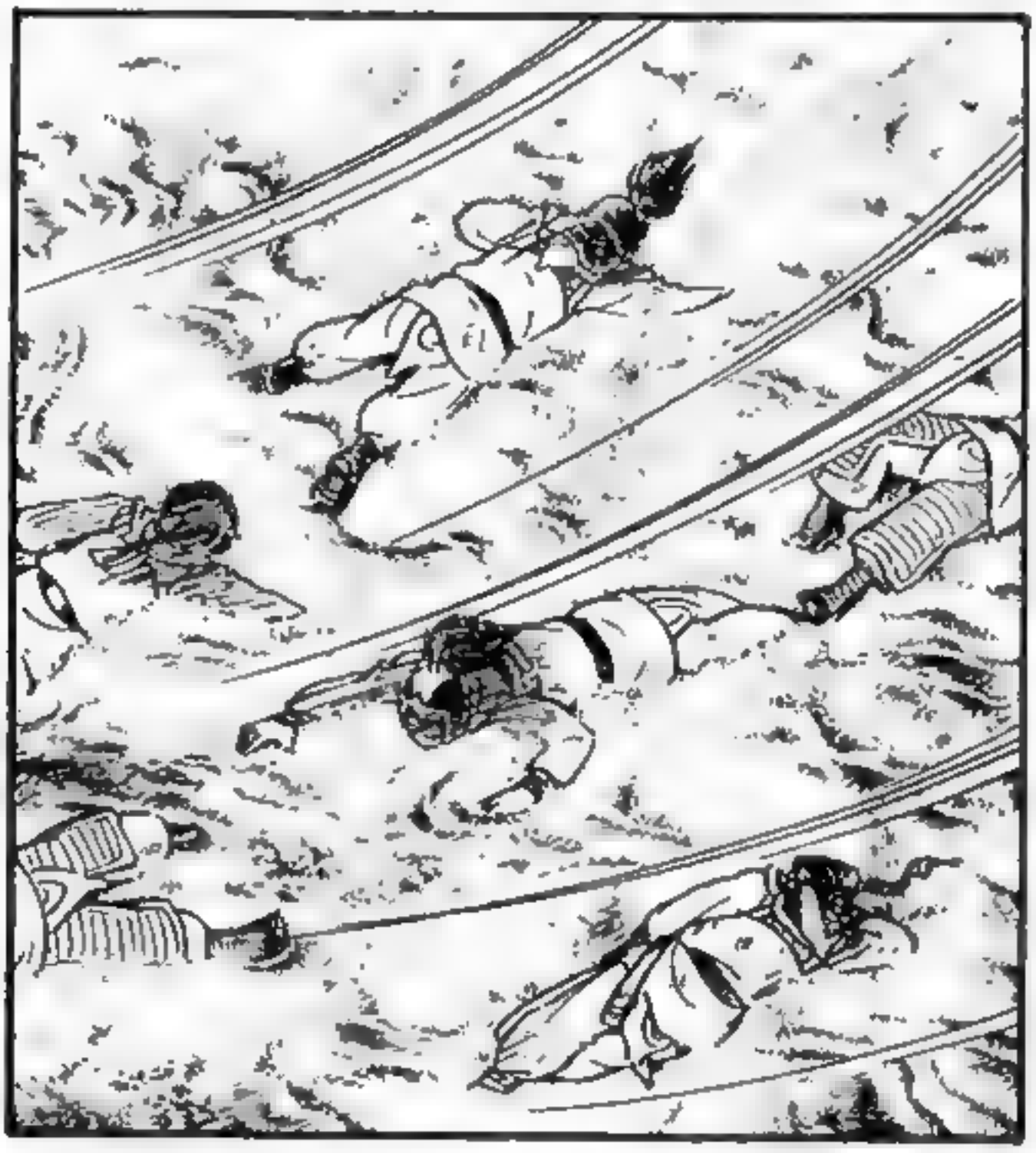
WHAT!? CAO CAO HAS RETREATED HIS FORCES!?

I SEE, HE MUST HAVE BEEN FORCED TO RETREAT DUE TO FOOD SHORTAGES.

BUT THE SAME GOES FOR ME AS WELL...

YES, SIR.
GENTLEMEN, YOU ARE ALL WELL AWARE OF THE RECENT LOCUST SWARM DEVASTATING THESE LANDS. THUS WE MUST ALL EAT AS LITTLE AS POSSIBLE AND BE SURE TO NOT WASTE A SINGLE GRAIN OF RICE.


AND SO CAO CAO AND LU BU'S BATTLE ENDED WITHOUT A VICTOR DUE TO THE LOCUSTS' INTERVENTION.



MEANWHILE, LET US TAKE A LOOK AT WHAT HAPPENED TO LIU BEI WHO HAD COME TO ASSIST TAO QIAN.

BEING A WEAK OLD MAN, TAO QIAN GREW MORE ILL DAY BY DAY.

AFTER CAO CAO'S ARMY HAD PULLED BACK, TAO QIAN, THE GOVERNOR OF XUZHOU, HAD FALLEN VERY ILL.

PLEASE DON'T SAY SUCH WEAK-WILLED THINGS, GOVERNOR.

I WON'T LIVE MUCH LONGER, YOU KNOW...

WHAT IS IT, SIR?

XUANDE...

I'D LIKE YOU TO BECOME THE GOVERNOR OF XUZHOU.

WHAT!?

WHAT IS IT, SIR?

I HAVE A REQUEST TO ASK OF YOU ...

BUT THIS IS JUST ALL TOO SUDDEN, I...

I HAVE ALREADY DISCUSSED THIS ISSUE WITH MY SONS AND RETAINERS.

ONE MUST ALSO LOVE AND TREAT HIS PEOPLE WELL.

BUT BRAVERY IS NOT ENOUGH...

ONLY THE BRAVE WILL BE ABLE TO DEFEND THEIR LANDS IN THESE TROUBLED TIMES.

SO I BEG OF YOU, PLEASE TAKE OVER AS THE GOVERNOR.

I BELIEVE YOU POSSESS THESE TWO CRUCIAL QUALITIES.

PLEASE BECOME OUR LORD.

PLEASE, SIR.

DON'T LET HIS OFFER GO TO WASTE, NOW...!

IF IT WERE ME, I'D HAVE ACCEPTED IT RIGHT ON THE SPOT!

...IT'S STILL A LITTLE TOO SUDDEN.

BROTHER, JUST WHY WON'T YOU AGREE TO THEIR REQUESTS?

SIR XUANDE!

. SHALL GO IMMEDI-ATELY!

WHAT!

THE GOVER-NOR HAS JUST PASSED AWAY.

HMM?

WE ARE PEASANTS HERE TO ASK SIR XUANDE SOMETHING.

WHO BLOCKS OUR WAY!?

PLEASE BECOME OUR GOVERNOR!

PLEASE, SIR...

ALL OF US CITIZENS WISH NOTHING MORE THAN TO HAVE A KIND MAN SUCH AS SIR TO BECOME OUR GOVERNOR.

IF THAT'S HOW THE XUZHOU CITIZENS FEEL, I SHALL UNDERSTAND.

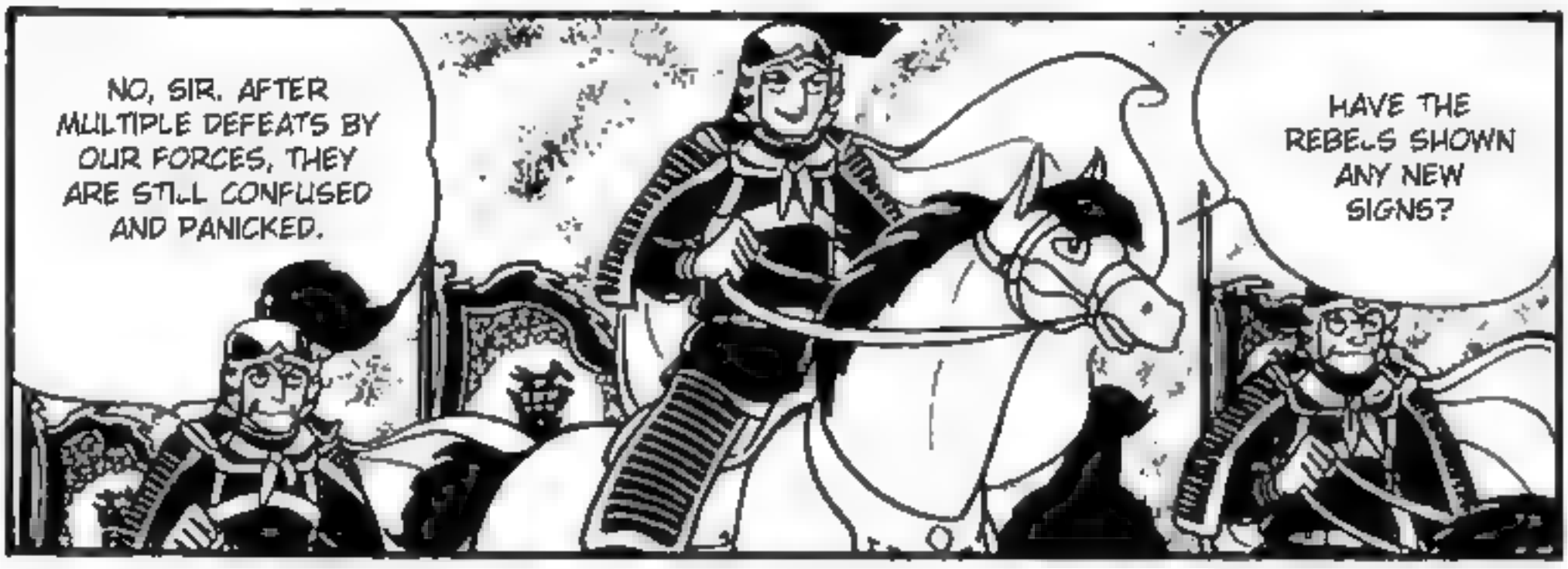
THANK YOU SIR!

THANK YOU SIR!

XUANDE DECIDED THEN AND THERE TO BECOME THE GOVERNOR OF XUZHOU

LIU BEI HAD ESSENTIALLY ACCOMPLISHED THE SAME THING WITHOUT SPILLING A DROP OF BLOOD

LOOKING BACK, WHILE CAO CAO AND LU BU FOUGHT A BLOODY BATTLE TO OBTAIN TERRITORY,


NO, SIR. AFTER MULTIPLE DEFEATS BY OUR FORCES, THEY ARE STILL CONFUSED AND PANICKED.
HAVE THE REBELS SHOWN ANY NEW SIGNS?

YES, SIR.

EXCELLENT, CONTINUE AS PLANNED THEN.

ONE MORE PUSH SHOULD BE ABLE TO FINISH THEM OFF, MY LORD.

CAO CAO, WHERE ARE YOU!? I AM HE YI, LEADER OF THE YELLOW SCARVES HERE! I DEMAND A DUEL WITH YOU!

GOOD, SOMEONE ARREST THAT MAN.

IT'S THE ENEMY LEADER, SIR.

HMM?

ALLOW ME, MY LORD.

カッカッ

?

W-WHO ARE YOU!?

HALT!

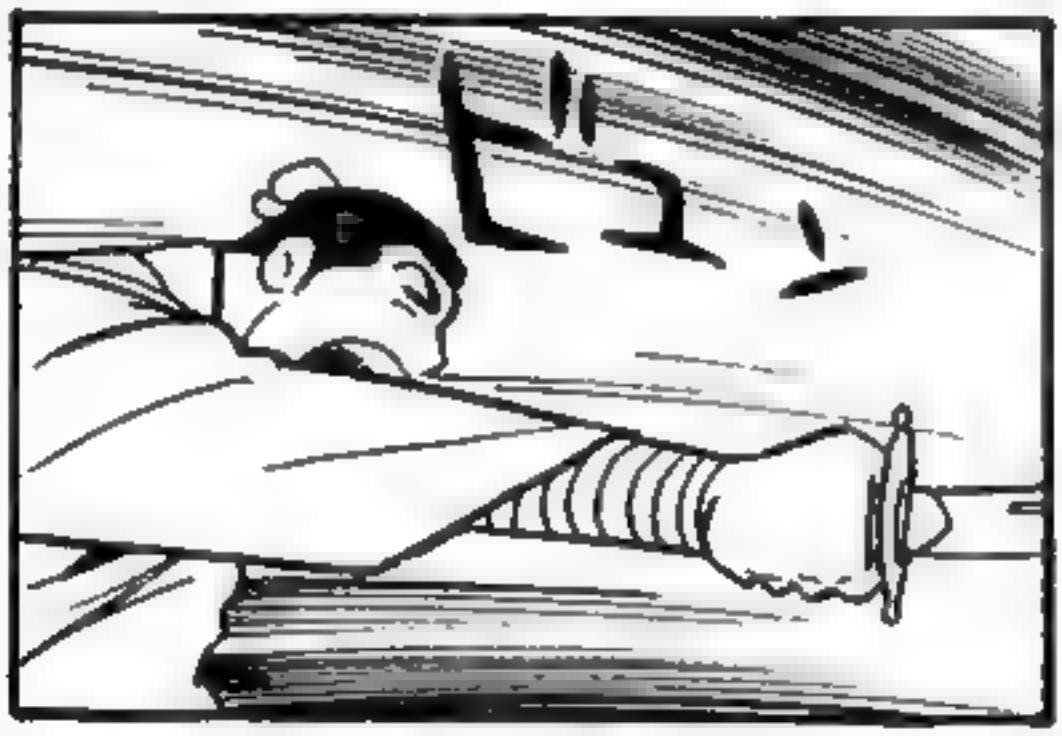
BUT I'M THE ONE WHO CAUGHT HIM.

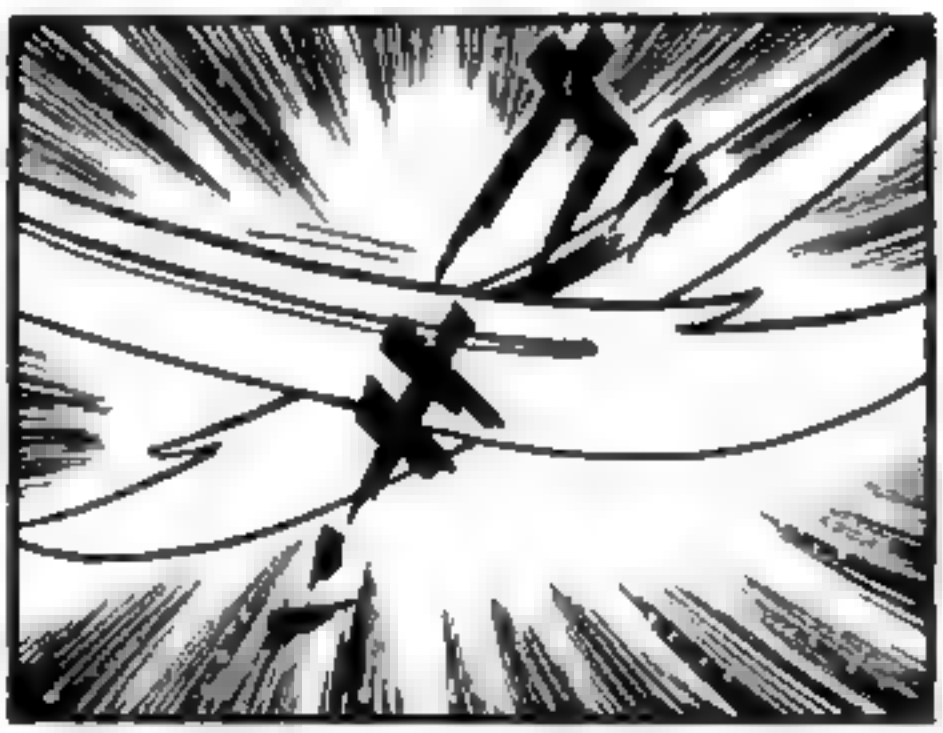
I DEMAND YOU HAND OVER THE ENEMY LEADER TO ME.

TAKE HIM FROM ME IF YOU CAN!

AND IF I DON'T TAKE 'NO' FOR AN ANSWER?

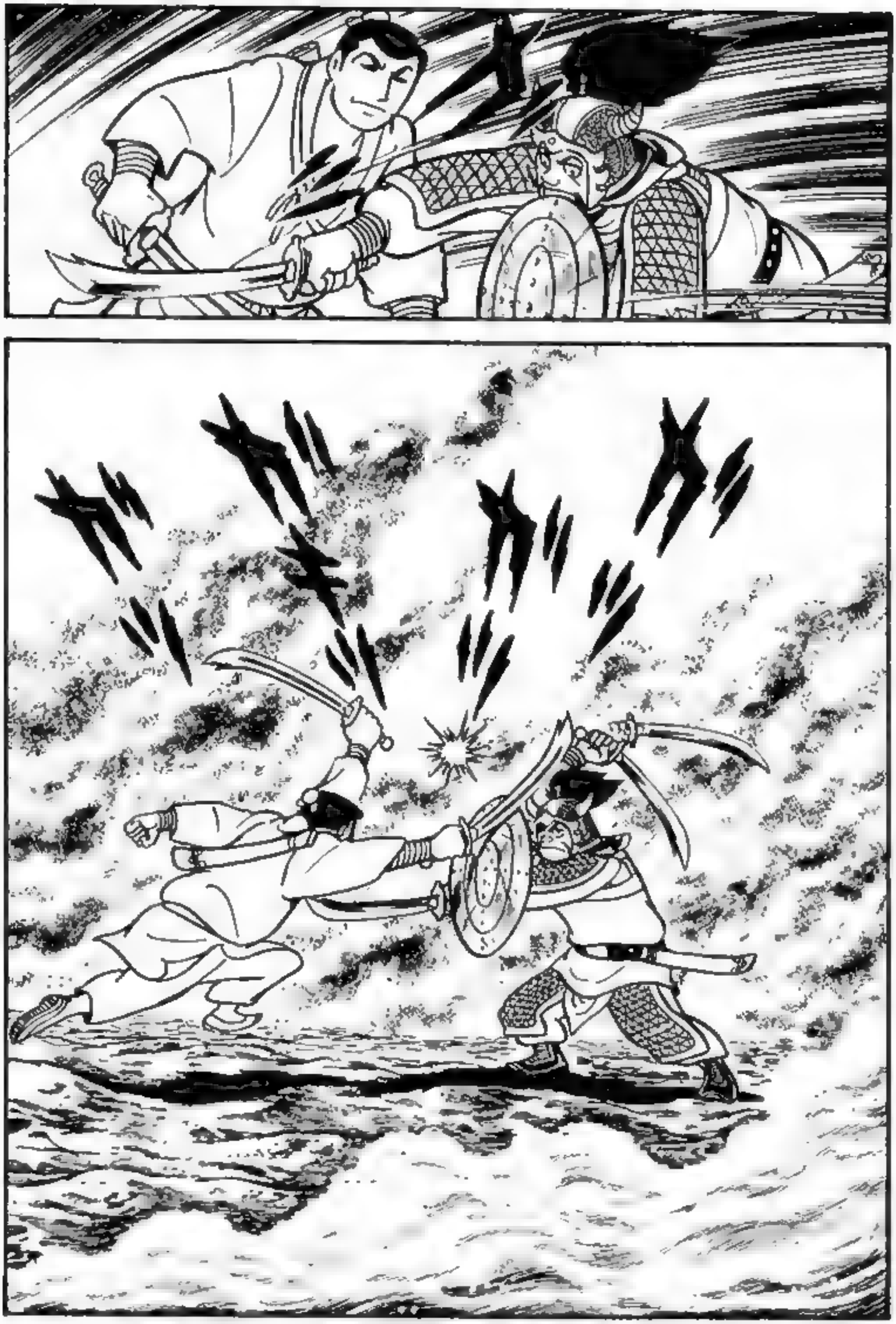
FINE.





HMM, HE'S STRONGER THAN I THOUGHT... I MUSTN'T LET MY GUARD DOWN.

AGH!



I DO NOT KNOW SIR, BUT HE APPEARS TO BE NO REBEL.

WHO IS THAT MAN FIGHTING WITH MY E LAI?

IT WOULD BE A WASTE TO HAVE MAN OF THAT CALIBRE BE KILLED...

NEITHER SEEMS TO BE GAINING THE UPPER HAND...

PREPARE THE TRAP.

HAH...
HAH...

HAH...
HAH...

SEND THE SIGNAL FOR E LAI TO RETREAT.

YES, SIR.

GOOD.

SIR, THE TRAP HAS BEEN PREPARED.

HMM!?

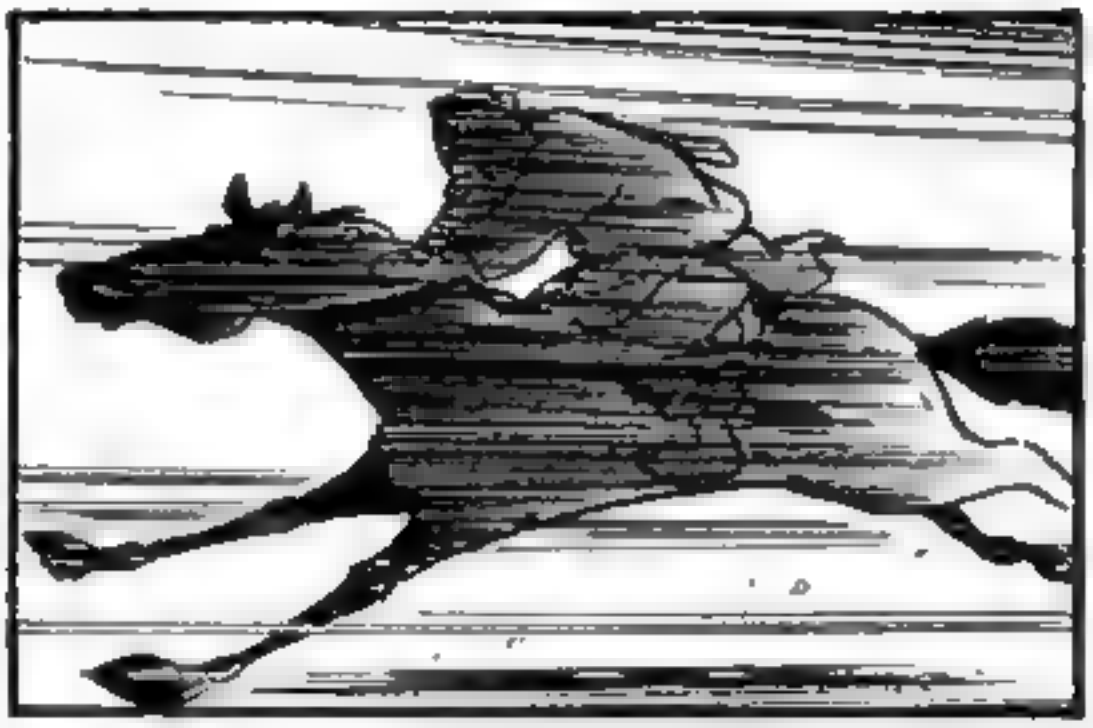
BUT ORDERS ARE ORDERS, I DARE NOT DISOBEY MY LORD.

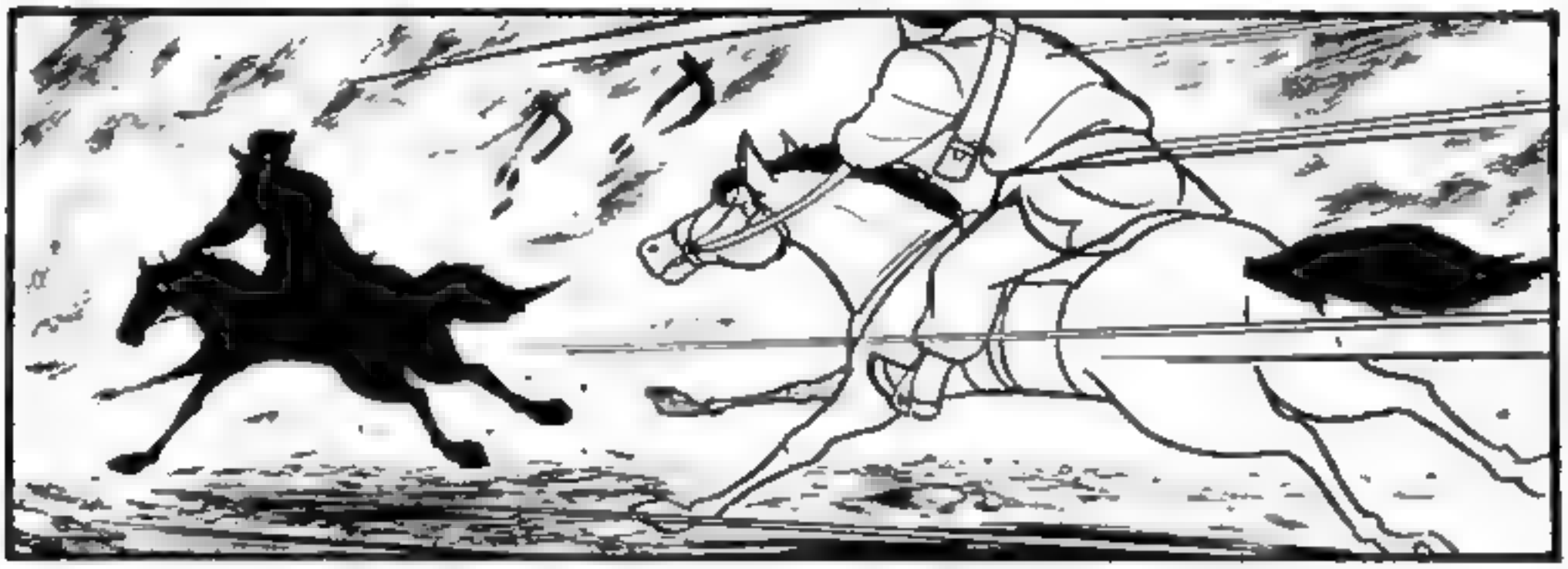
SIGNAL TO RETREAT? HMPH, I WOULD HAVE HIM AFTER A FEW MORE BOUTS...!

RUNNING AWAY!? OUR FIGHT HASN'T BEEN SETTLED YET!

NGHH...!

I AM NOT FLEEING, I AM MERELY FOLLOWING ORDERS.





HEH,

SOMETHING MUST BE UP...

THIS WAY, GENERAL DIAN WEI.

?

AGHH!

NOW!

GOOD, BRING HIM IN.

YES, SIR.

IS THAT SO?

MY LORD, WE HAVE SUCCESSFULLY ARRESTED THE STRANGER.

HMM?

JUST WHO ALLOWED FOR SUCH ROUGH TREATMENT TO THE PRISONER!?

PLEASE FORGIVE MY MEN FOR THEIR ROUGH TREATMENT. THEY MUST HAVE MISUNDERSTOOD ME.

Y-YES, SIR.

UNTIE THE ROPES NOW!

?

A SUBORDI-NATE?

AFTER SEEING YOUR VALOUR AND SKILL, I WISHED TO MAKE YOU INTO ONE OF MY SUBORDINATES.

I AM XU CHU, A SIMPLE PEASANT, SIR.

YES, BUT INTRODUCTIONS FIRST. I AM CAO CAO, GOVERNOR OF YANZHOU. AND YOU ARE...?

I SEE...

SO DO YOU HAVE ANY INTEREST WORKING UNDER ME?

THESE REGIONS HAVE BEEN PLAGUED BY VIOLENT REBELS IN RECENT TIMES. AND SO THE PEOPLE OF OUR VILLAGE BUILT A FORTRESS IN THE MOUNTAINS TO FEND THEM OFF. I AM ONE OF THE VILLAGERS WHO BUSIED HIMSELF FIGHTING THE REBELS.

AS SUCH, I WAS READY TO ACCEPT MY FATE, EVEN IF IT WERE TO BE DEATH. BUT TO HEAR THAT SIR IS OFFERING A SIMPLE PEASANT LIKE ME A POSITION MAKES ME HAPPIER THAN WORDS CAN EXPRESS.

NOW THAT SIR HAS VANQUISHED THE REBELS, MY ROLE HERE IS OVER.

WITH PLEASURE, SIR.

SO YOU ACCEPT?

GOOD. GENTLEMEN, LET US CELEBRATE TODAY'S VICTORY OVER THE REBELS AND A NEW WORTHY ADDITION TO OUR ARMY!

OUR LORD IS NOT ONLY SHARP AND TALENTED, BUT IS ALSO KIND TO HIS SUBJECTS.

SAME HERE.

IT IS GOOD TO HAVE YOU ON MY SIDE NOW.

HE WILL MOST DEFINITELY REACH AN EVEN HIGHER POSITION AND GO ON TO DO GREAT THINGS.

THE WANDERING ARMY

WHAT!
INCIDENTALLY, I'VE HEARD THAT LIU BEI XUANDE HAS BECOME THE GOVERNOR OF XUZHOU AND HAS SINCE TAKEN A WIFE AND BROUGHT HIS MOTHER TO LIVE WITH HIM.

XUANDE SHOULD BE WELL AWARE THAT TAO QIAN IS THE MAN RESPONSIBLE FOR MY FATHER'S DEATH. AND IF IT WEREN'T FOR LU BU ATTACKING YANZHOU WHILE I WAS AWAY, XUZHOU SHOULD HAVE BEEN MINE BY NOW...

UNFORGIVABLE! I SHALL TAKE HIS HEAD WITH THESE HANDS!

HE DARES TO STEAL THE LAND THAT SHOULD RIGHTFULLY BE MINE AFTER CALLING AN ARMISTICE!?

IT WOULD BE WISE TO RECLAIM OUR LAND FIRST BEFORE ATTACKING XUZHOU AGAIN.

I BEG MY LORD TO PLEASE RECONSIDER.

WE SHALL CHANGE PLANS TO ATTACK XUZHOU AT ONCE!

LU BU'S GENERALS XUE LAN AND LI FANG ARE GUARDING YANZHOU CASTLE AT THE MOMENT AND APPARENTLY THEY ARE RUNNING LOW ON SUPPLIES. THERE HAVE BEEN REPORTS OF THEIR SOLDIERS RESORTING TO PILLAGING.

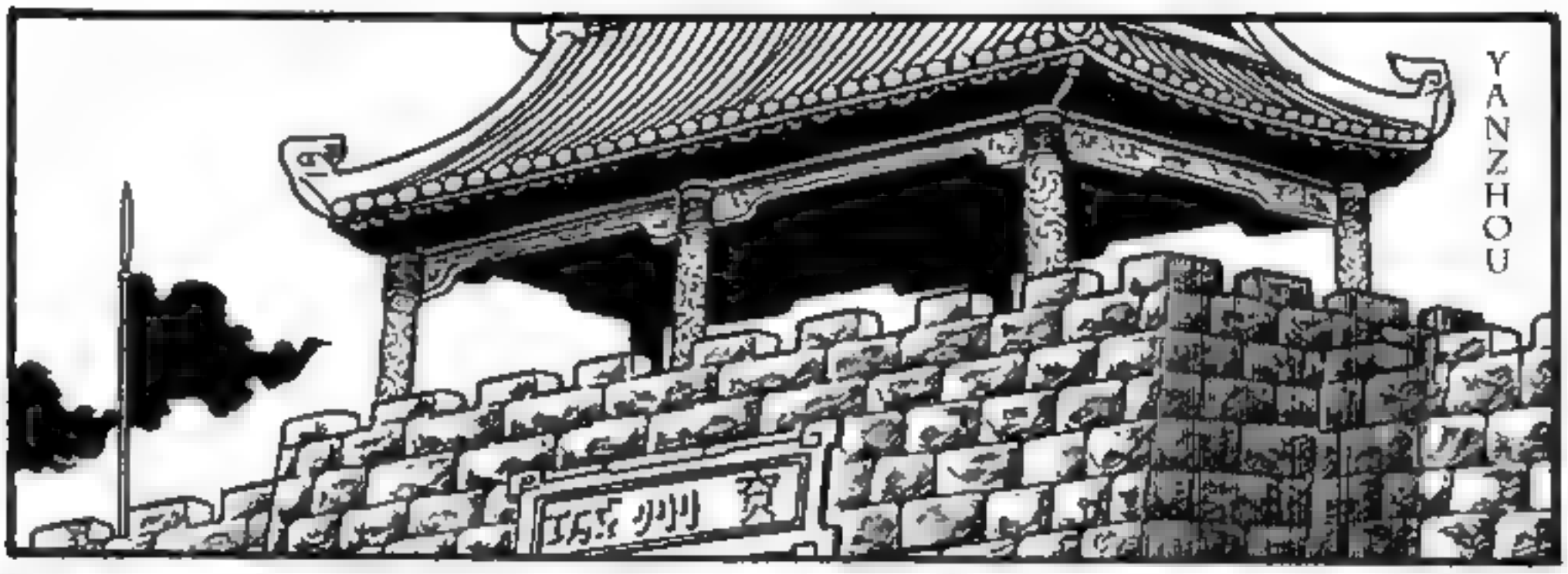
I SEE, YOU BRING UP A GOOD POINT.

IT WOULD BE BEST TO ATTACK NOW WHILE THE ENEMY IS IN DISORDER.

ALRIGHT, WE SHALL HEAD TOWARDS YANZHOU TOMORROW THEN.

YES, I SHALL DO AS YOU SAY.

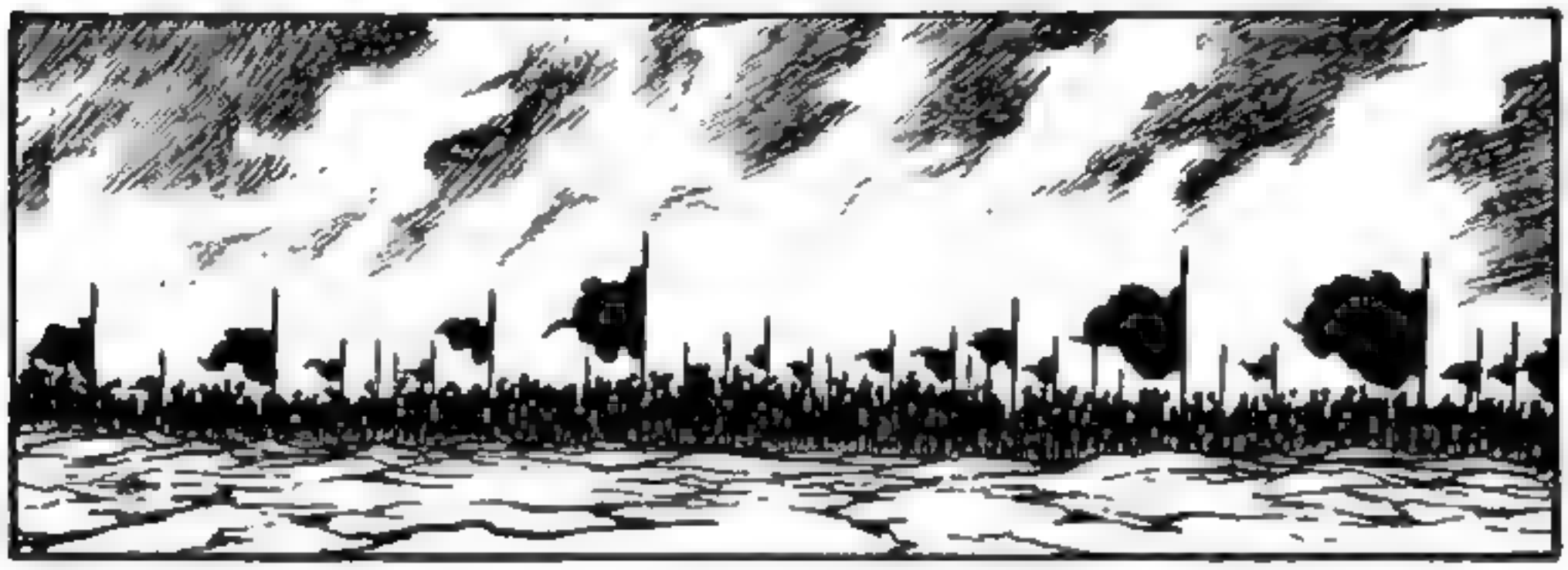
I BELIEVE WE SHOULD PRIORITIZE YANZHOU FIRST BEFORE EXPANDING OUR TERRITORIES.

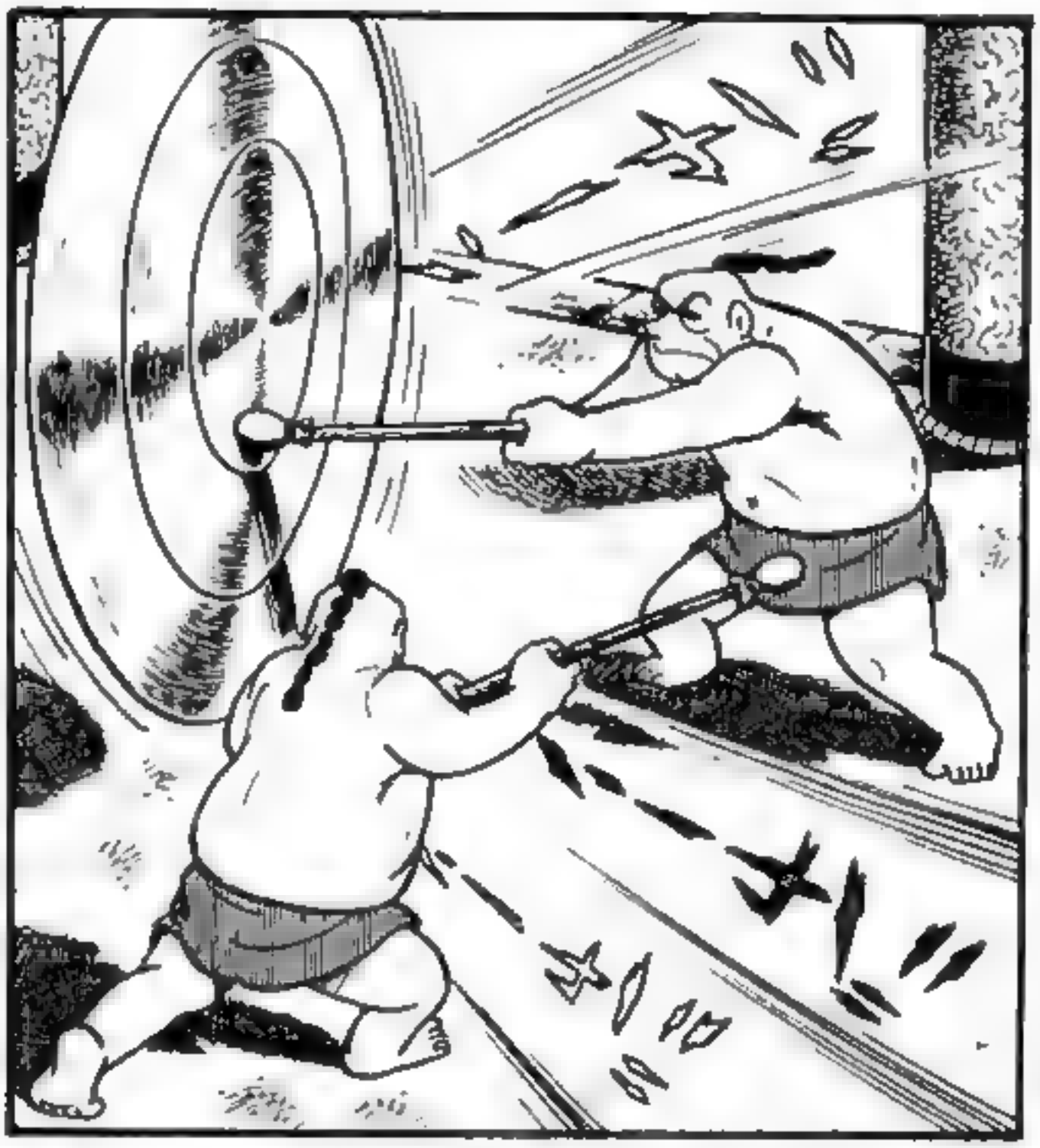

YANZHOU

JUST WHEN DID HE...!?

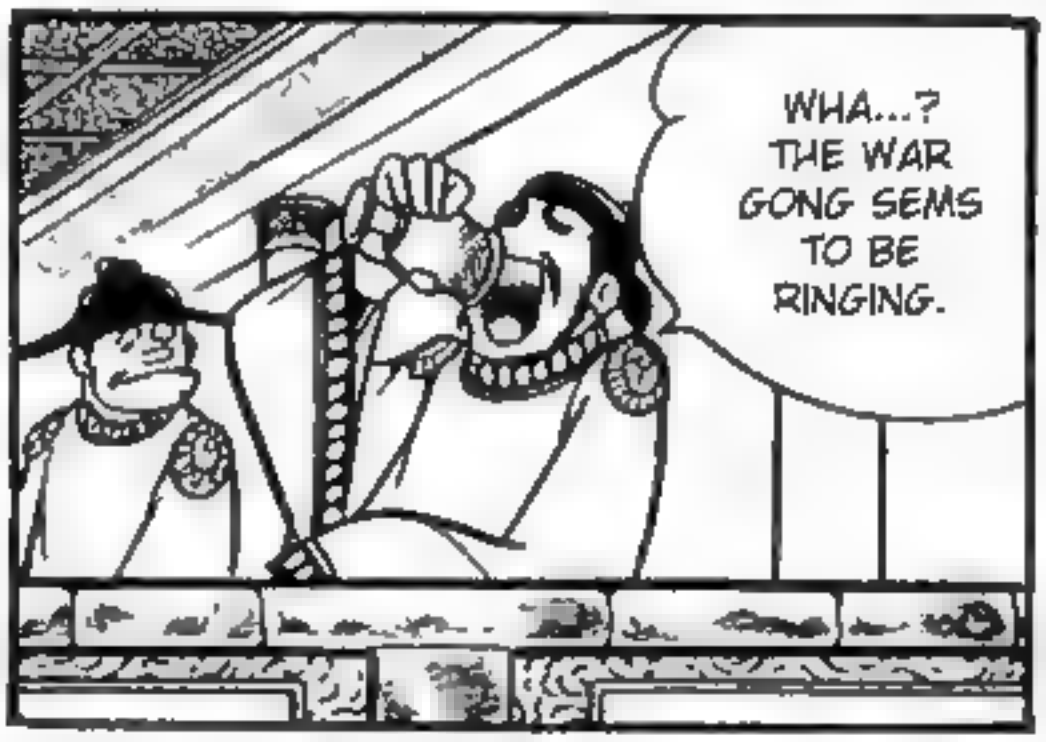
ARE YOU SURE!? WASN'T HE SUPPOSED TO BE FIGHTING REBELS IN JUANCHENG!?
WHAT!? CAO CAO'S ARMY IS COMING HERE THIS INSTANT!?

AHH!!!

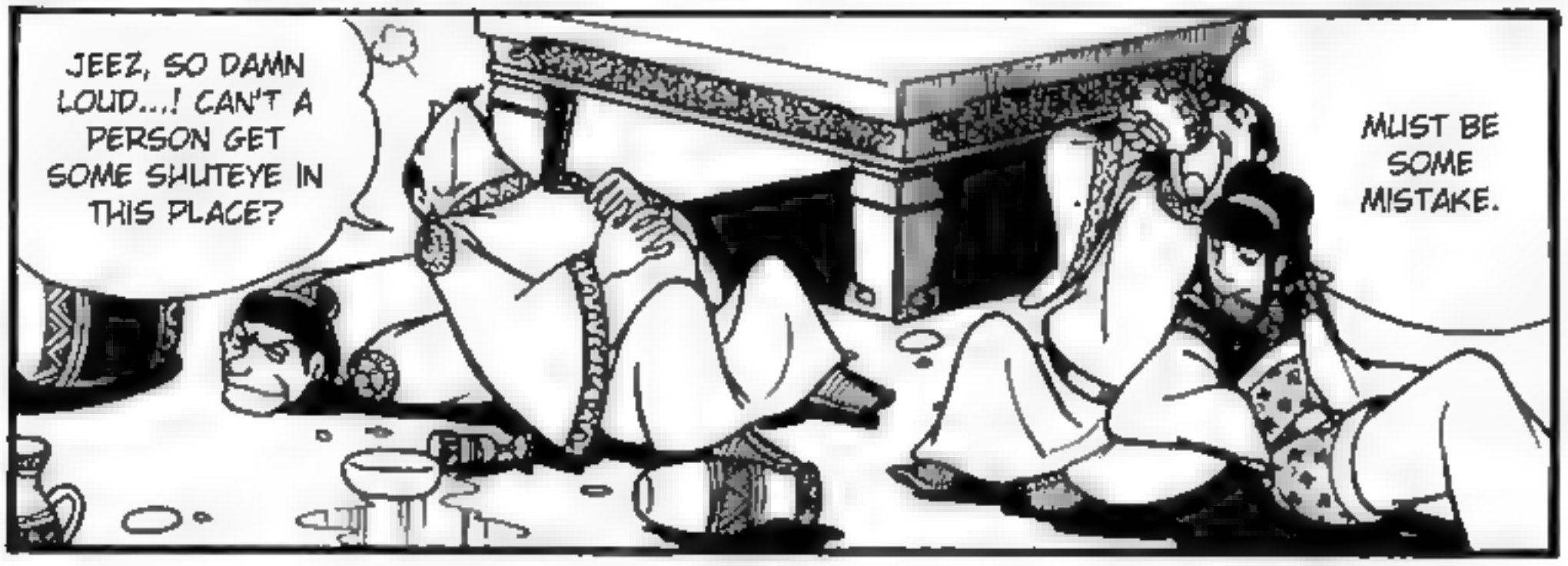


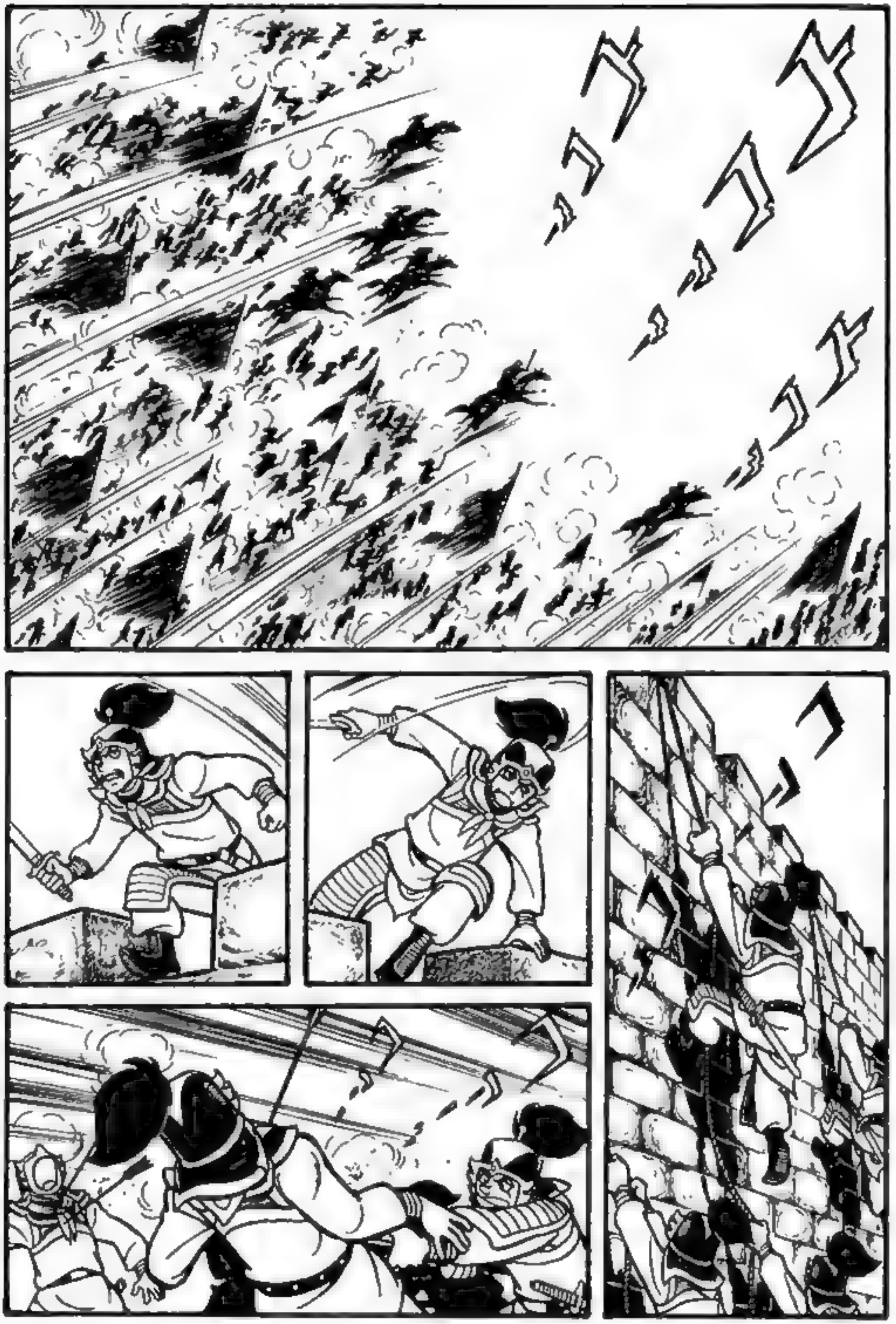


SOUND THE SIGNAL TO MOBILIZE OUR FORCES!


WHA...? THE WAR GONG SEMS TO BE RINGING.

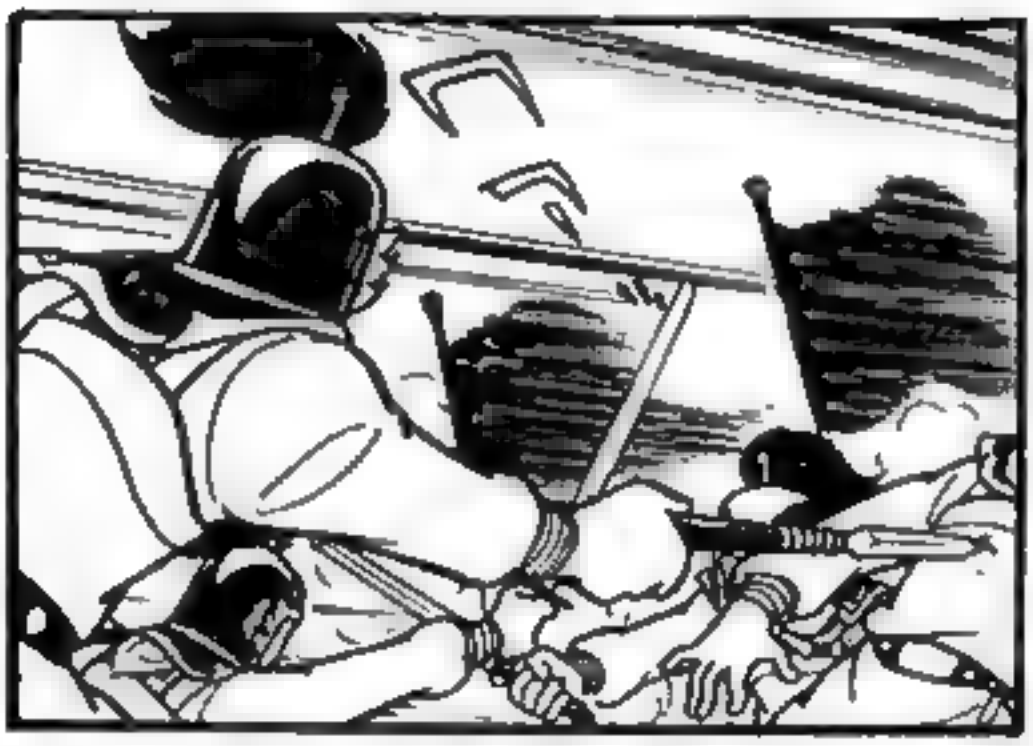
HMM?


JEEZ, SO DAMN LOUD...! CAN'T A PERSON GET SOME SHUTEYE IN THIS PLACE?
MUST BE SOME MISTAKE.



OPEN THE GATES FOR OUR COMRADES OUTSIDE!

NOW, CHARGE!



HMM?

AND I AM LI FANG!

I AM GENERAL XUE LAN!

ARE YOU TWO THE ENEMY GENERALS!?

I SHALL TAKE BOTH YOUR HEADS TO THANK MY NEW LORD!

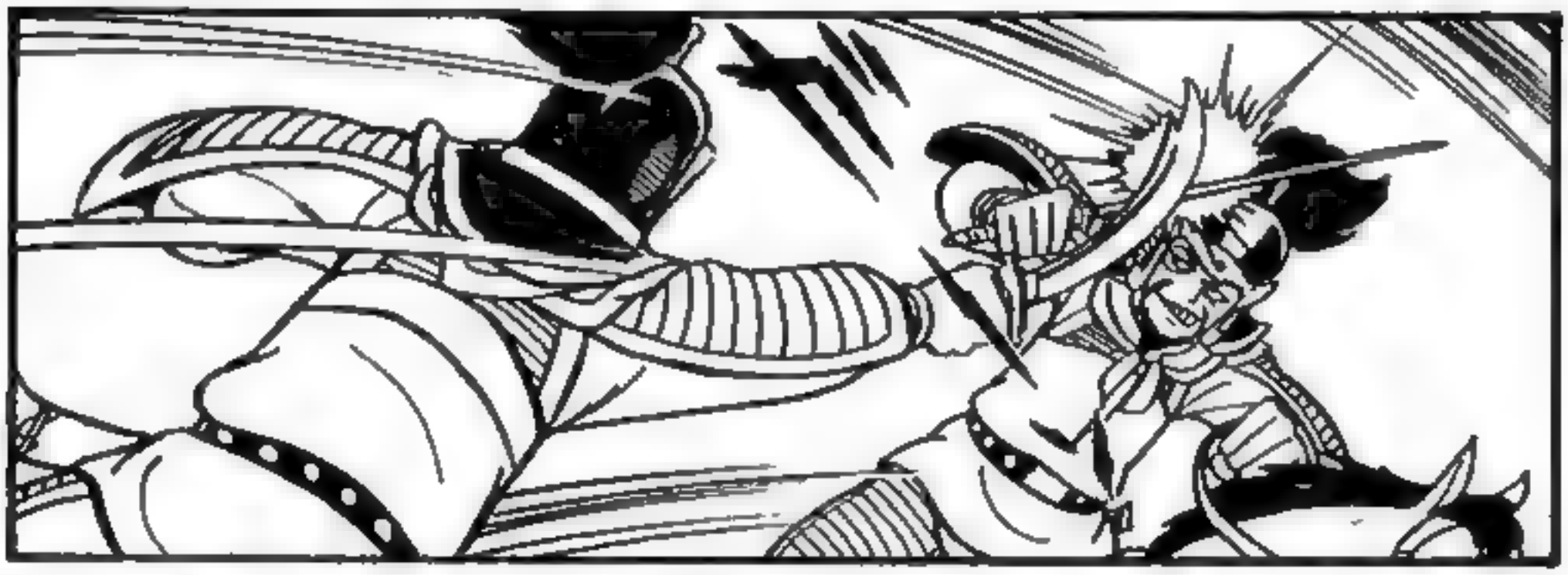
GOOD, GOOD.

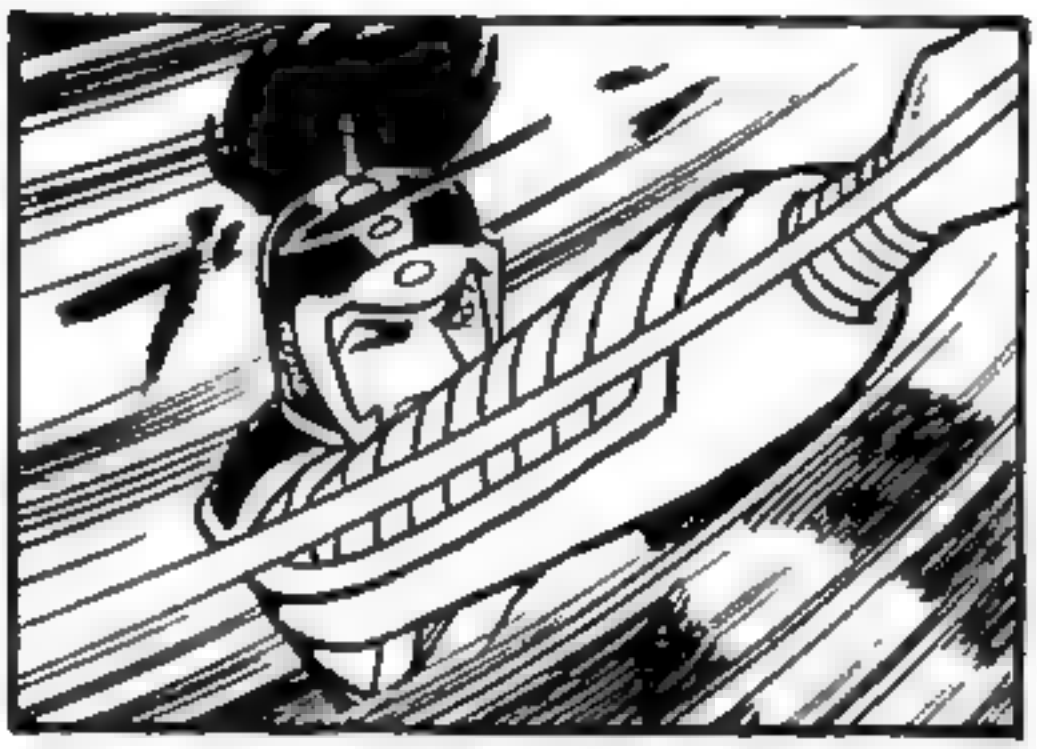
HE THINKS HE CAN TAKE ON BOTH OF US!?

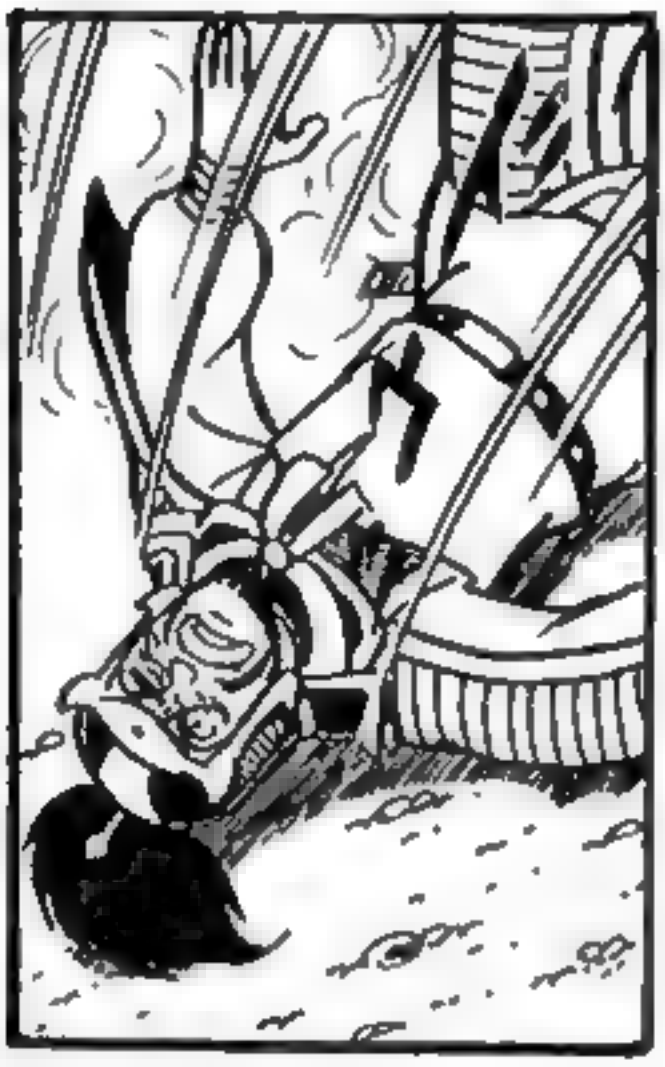
COCKY LITTLE RUNT ...!

ARGH...

AHH...!





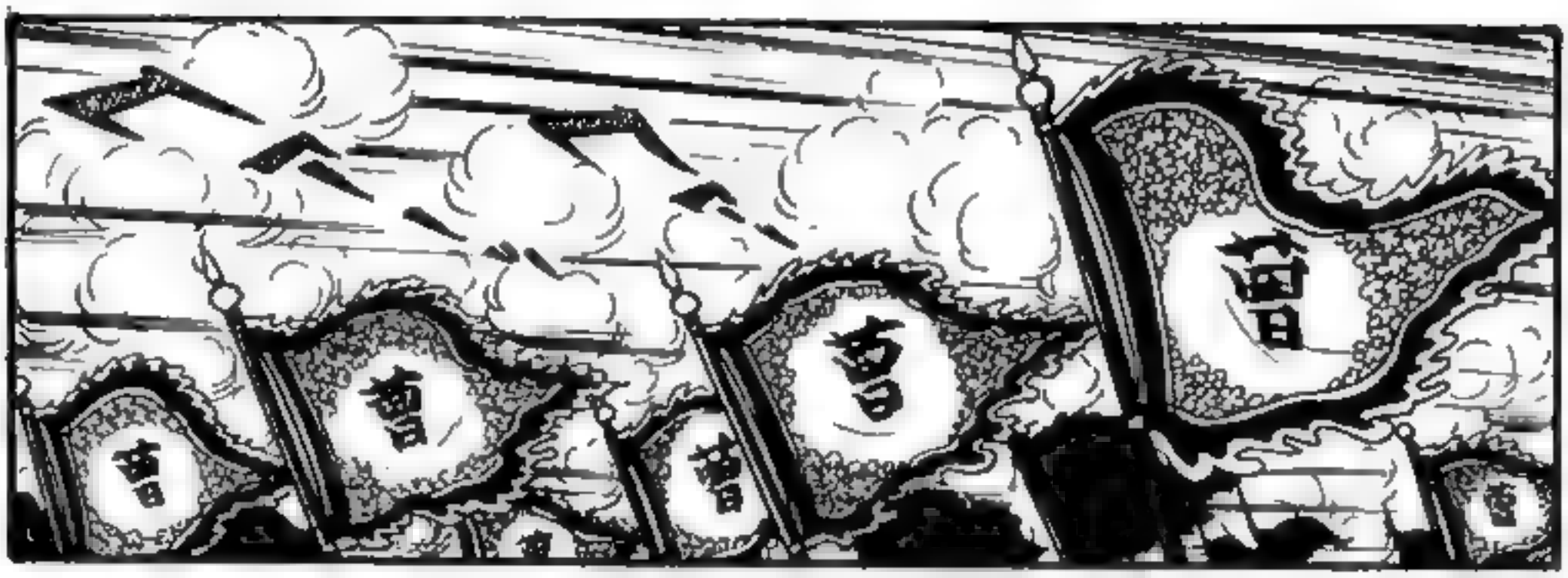


I, XU CHU, HAVE SLAIN THE ENEMY COMMANDERS XUE LAN AND LI FANG!

ACKK!!!

GULP!

GOOD, THE ENEMIES ARE FLEEING IN FEAR. IT IS TIME TO FINISH THEM OFF.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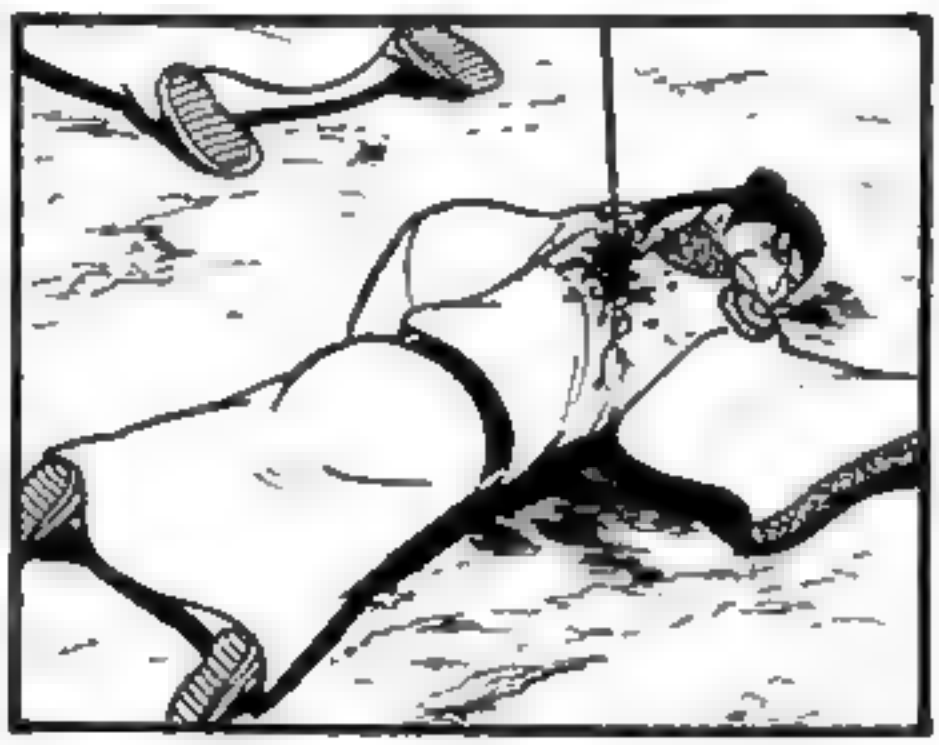
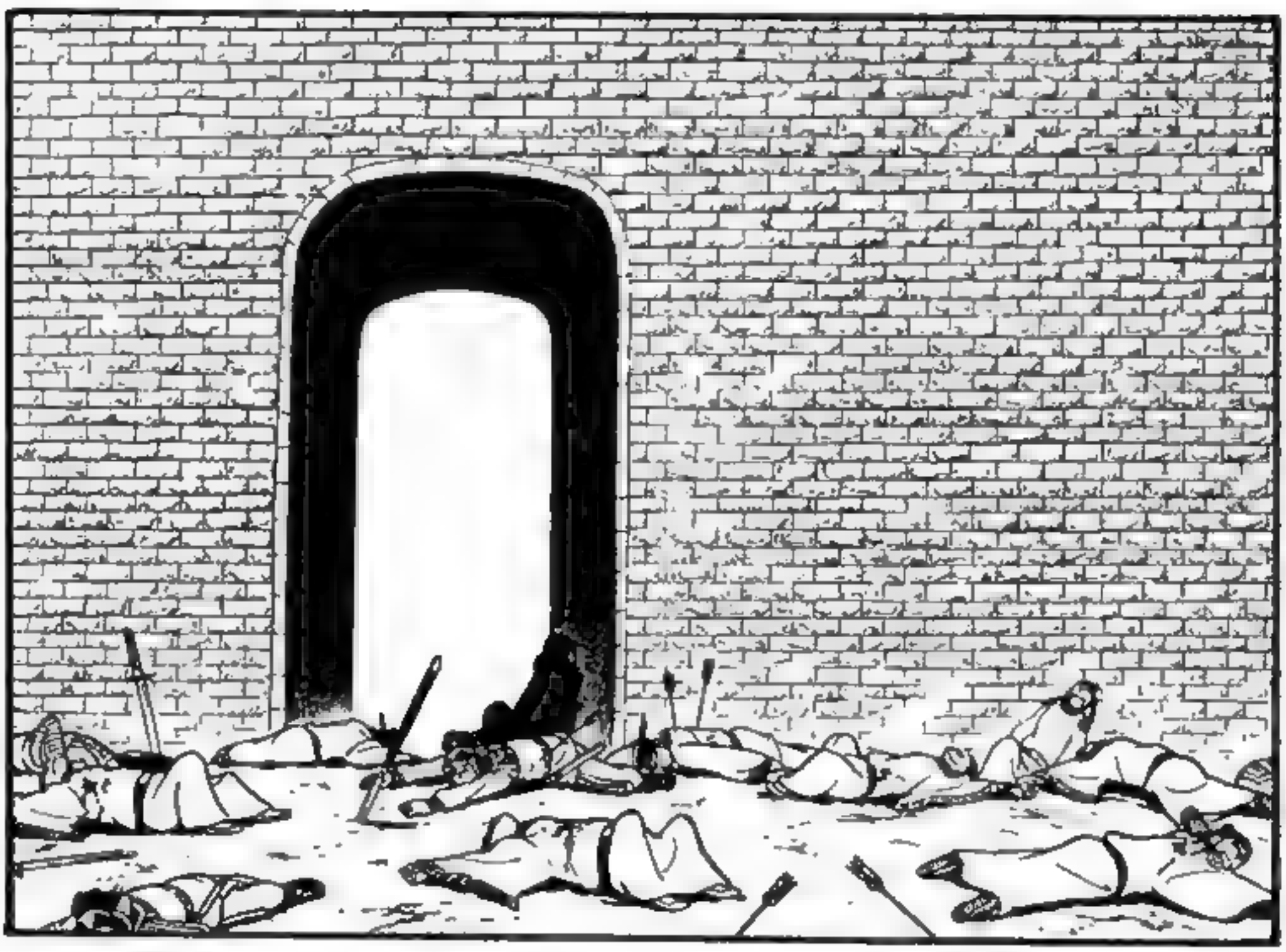
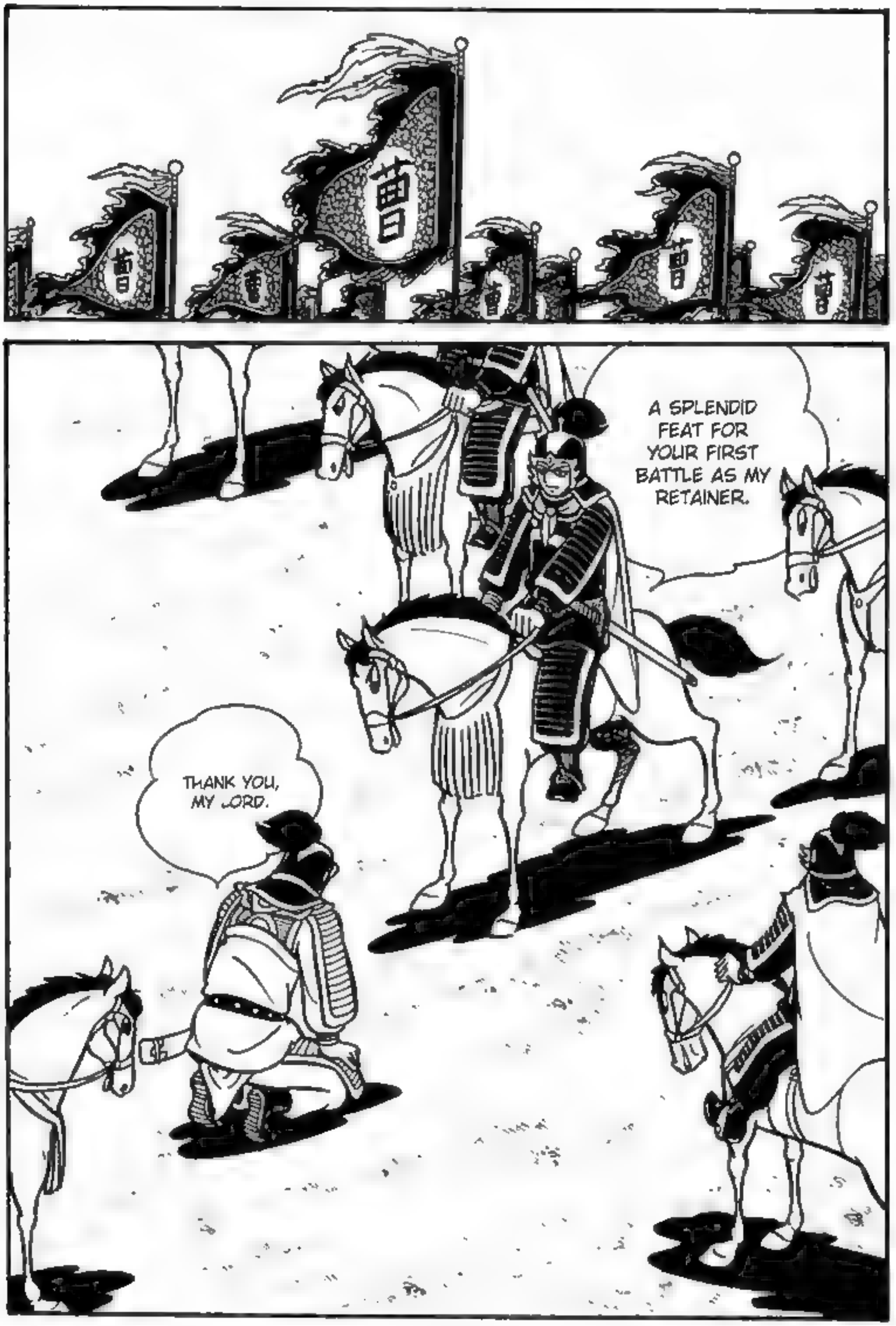
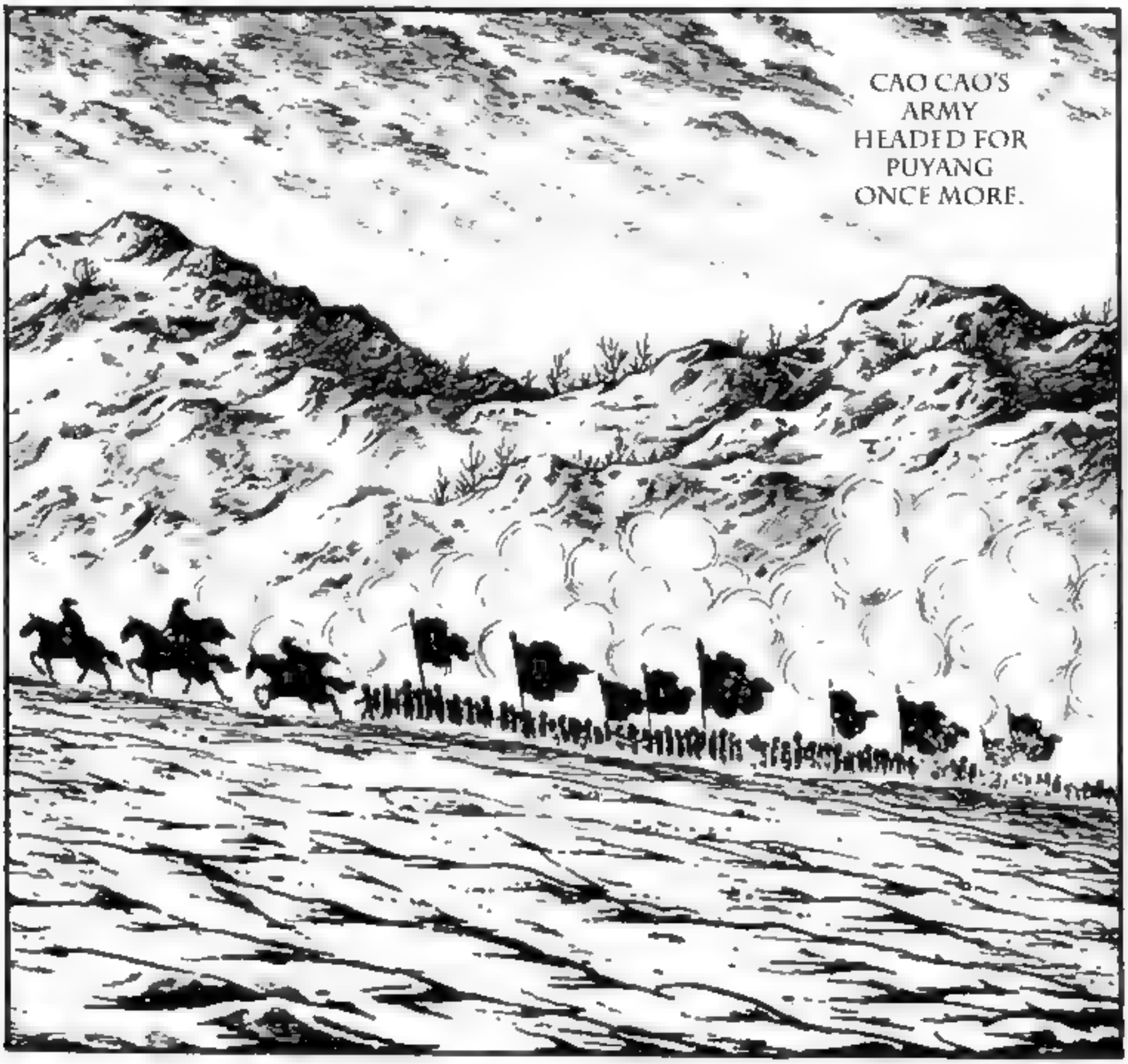





A SPLENDID FEAT FOR YOUR FIRST BATTLE AS MY RETAINER.
THANK YOU, MY LORD.

LET US RIDE ON THIS WAVE OF VICTORY AND TAKE BACK PUYANG FROM LU BU!


CAO CAO'S ARMY HEADED FOR PUYANG ONCE MORE.

WHAT!? CAO CAO HAS TAKEN BACK YANZHOU CASTLE AND IS HEADED BACK HERE AGAIN!?

PUYANG

DAMN THAT USELESS XUE LAN AND LI FANG...!

IT'S TIME TO TAKE MATTERS INTO MY OWN HANDS. BRING ME MY ARMOUR.

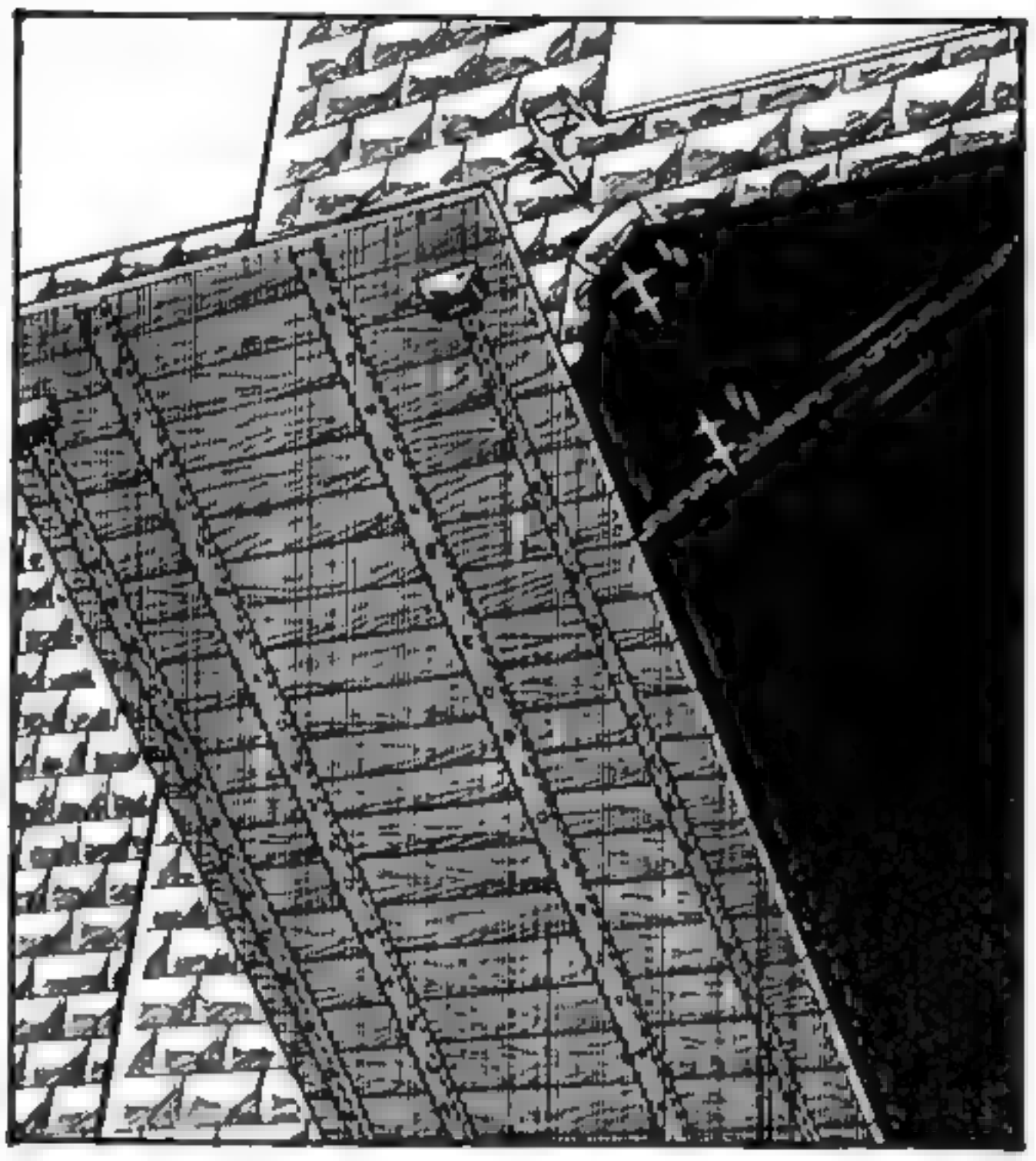
SILENCE! I FEAR NOT OF THE LIKES OF CAO CAO!

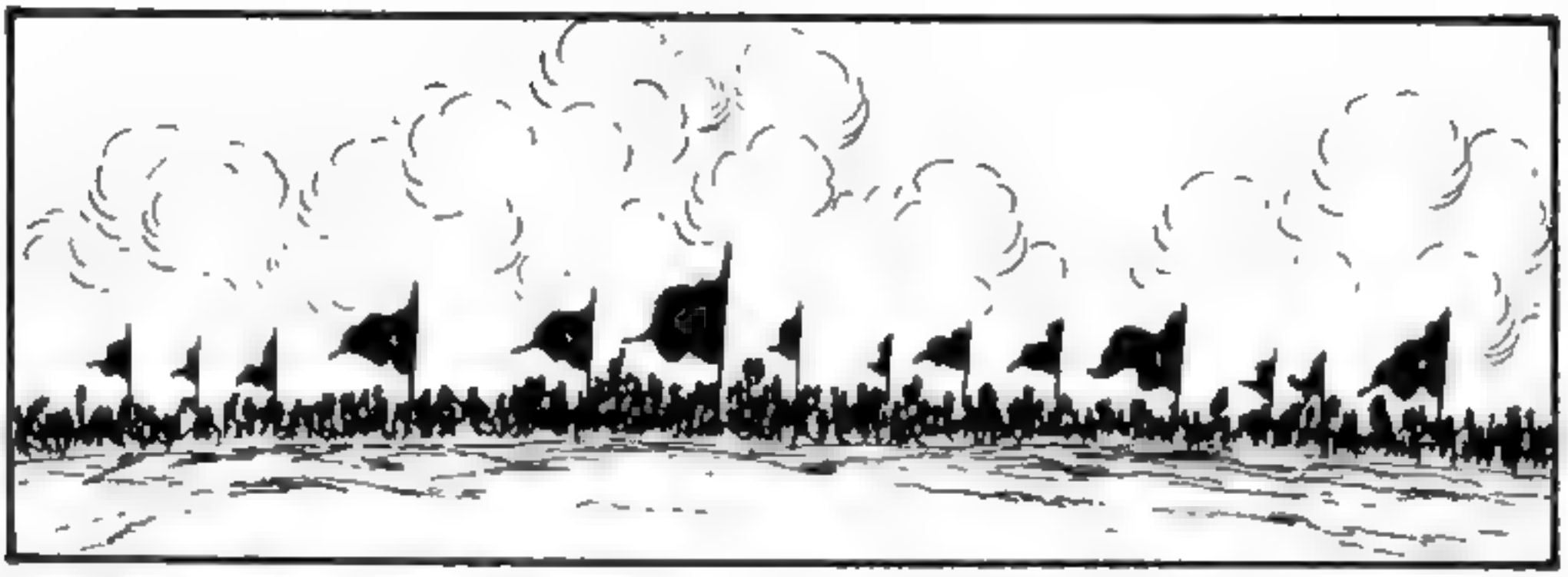
SIR, IT IS DISADVANTAGEOUS TO MEET CAO CAO'S ARMY HEAD ON OUTSIDE THE CASTLE. I BELIEVE IT WOULD BE BEST TO FORTIFY THE CASTLE DEFENSES INSTEAD.

BRING ME MY RED HARE.

I SHALL BREAK THROUGH THEIR LINES INSTANTLY! EVERYONE FOLLOW ME!

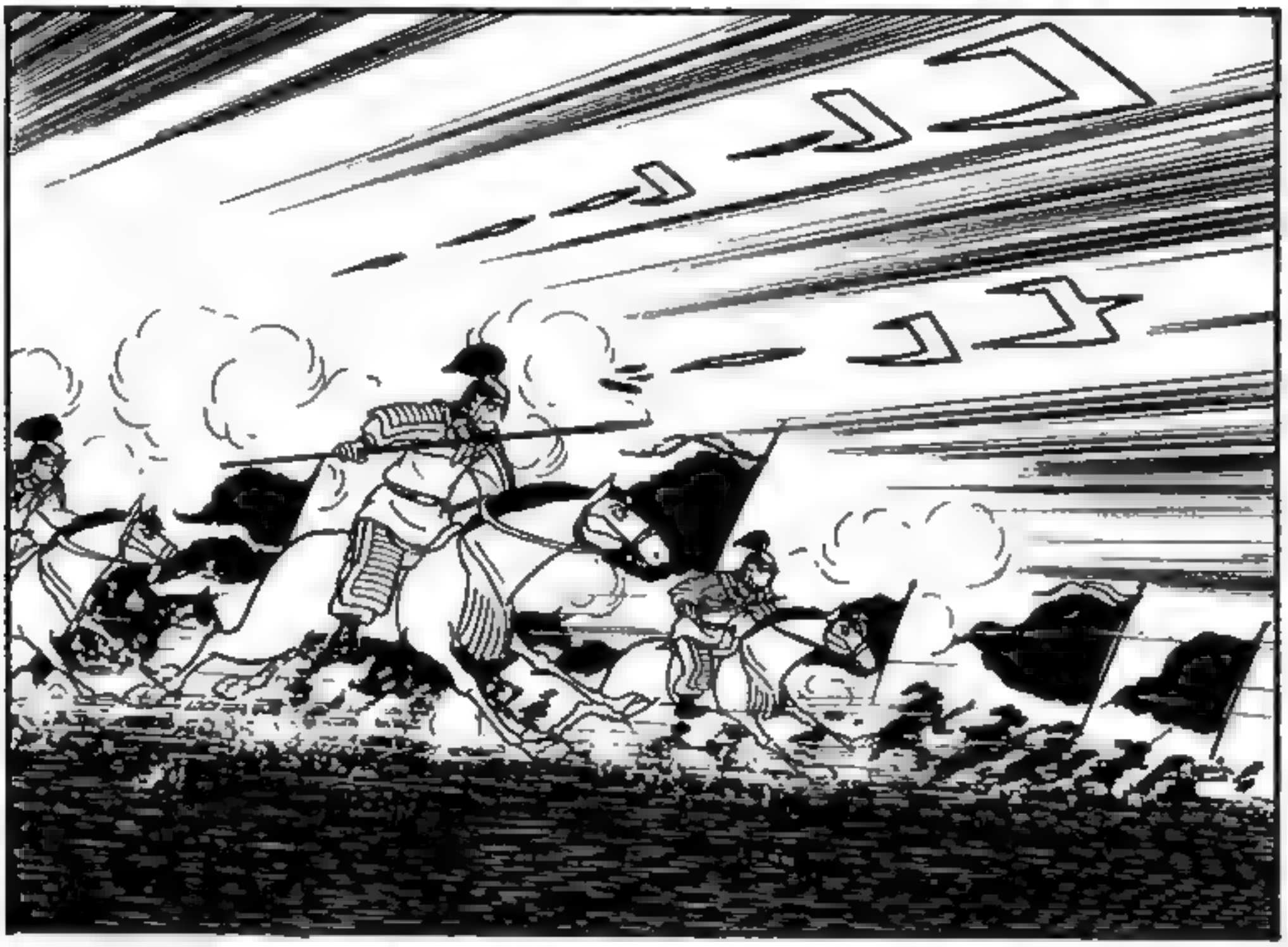
LOWER THE DRAW-BRIDGE!





CHARGE!

GOOD.
MY LORD, LU BU HAS COME OUT FROM THE CASTLE.



MOVE!!!

MOVE IT! I'VE COME TO DEAL WITH CAO CAO, NOT HIS WORTHLESS FOOTSOLDIERS!

HMM...

DO YOU WANT TO TASTE DEATH THAT MUCH!?

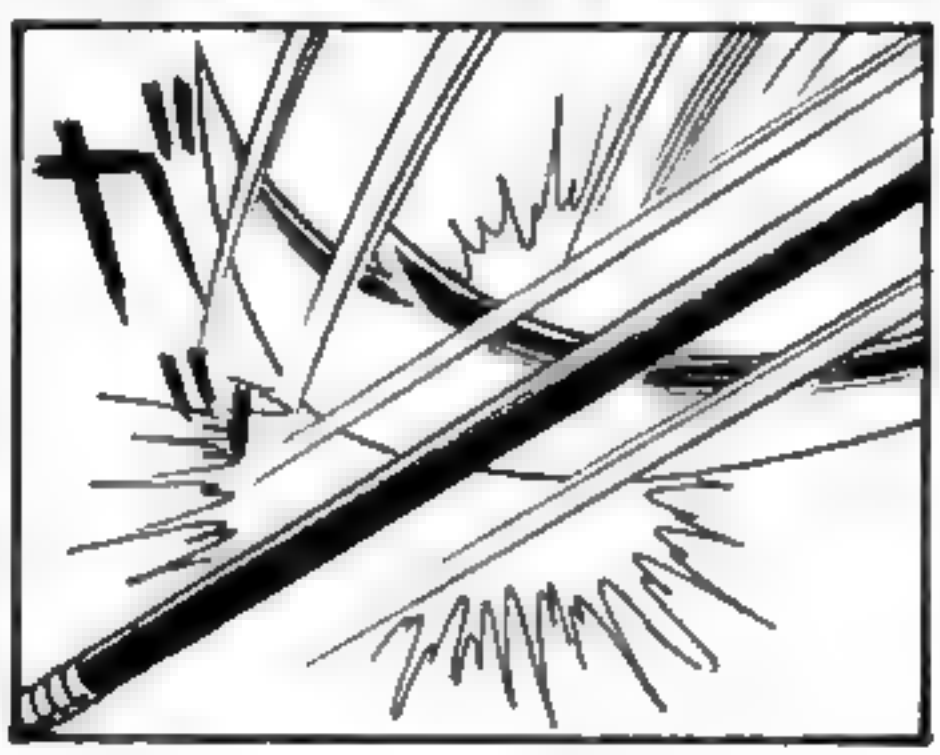
A MOST WORTHY OPPONENT INDEED.

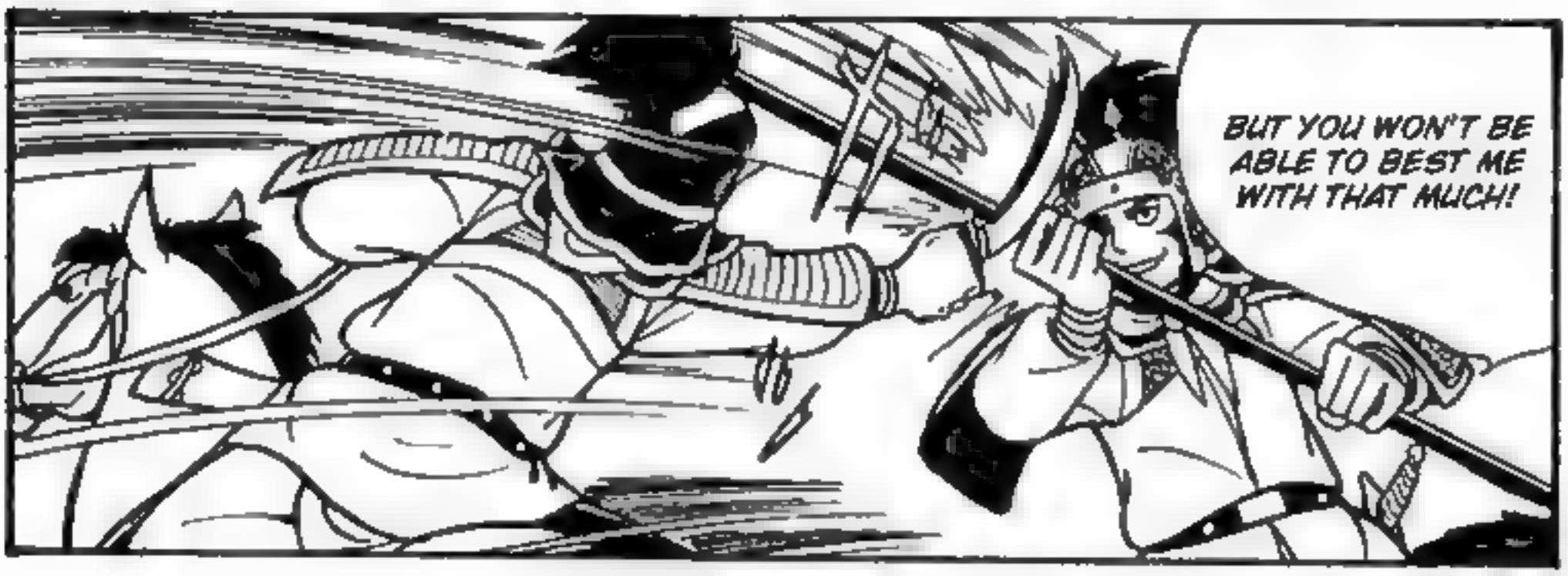
ANOTHER ONE WHO WISHES TO DIES SO SOON...?

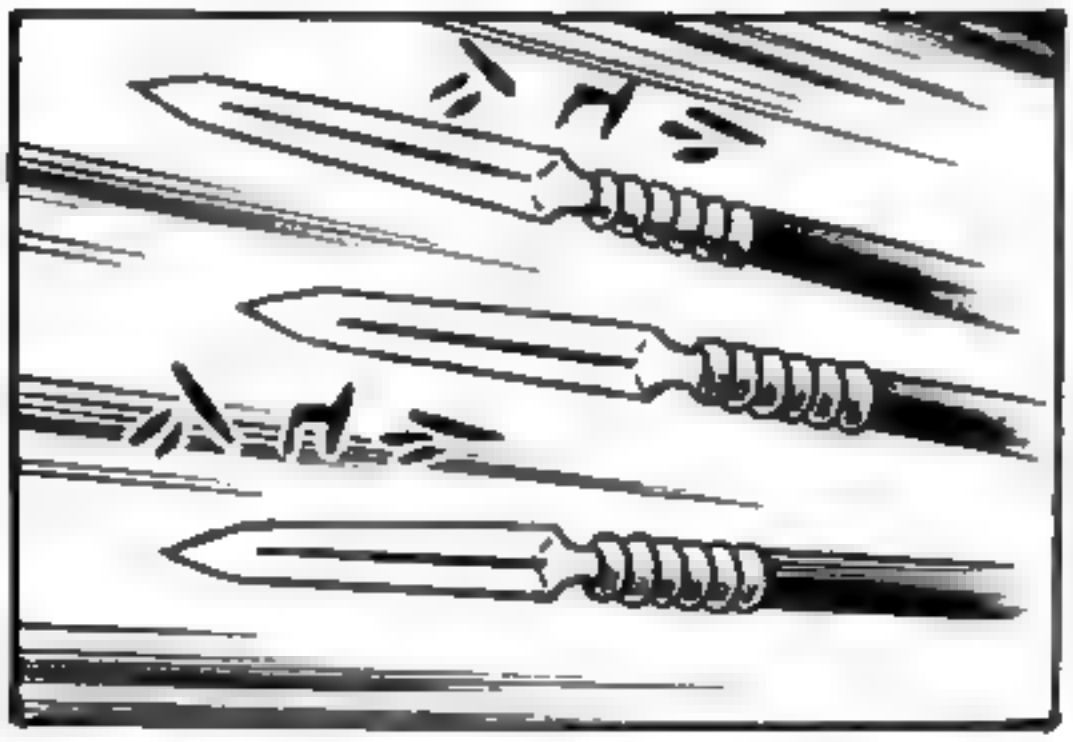
HALT! XU CHU SHALL BE YOUR OPPONENT!

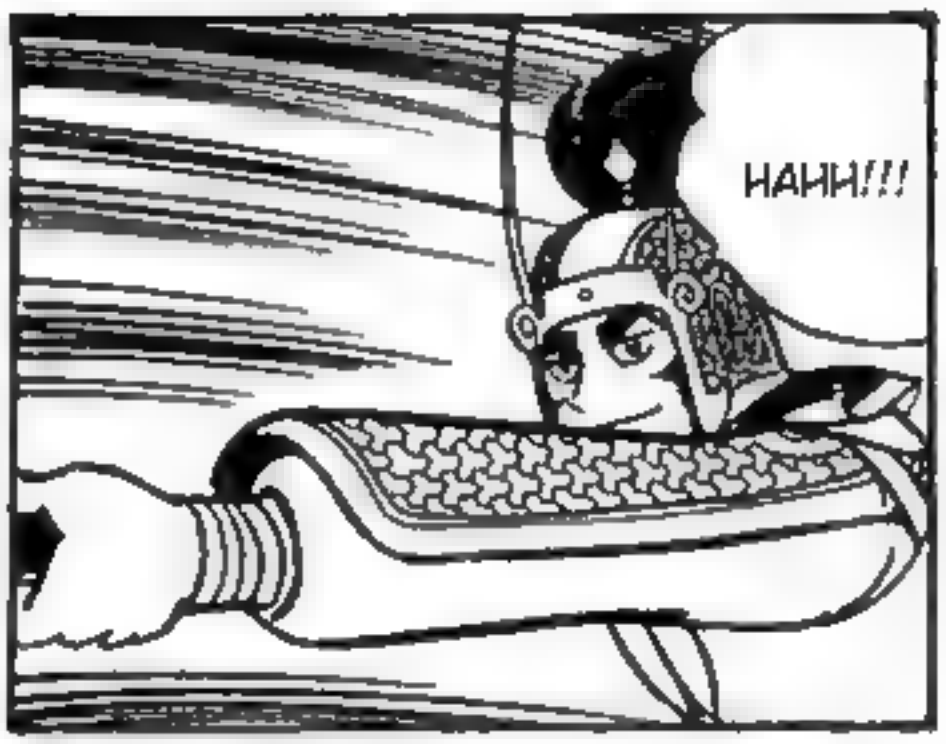
E"Z"!

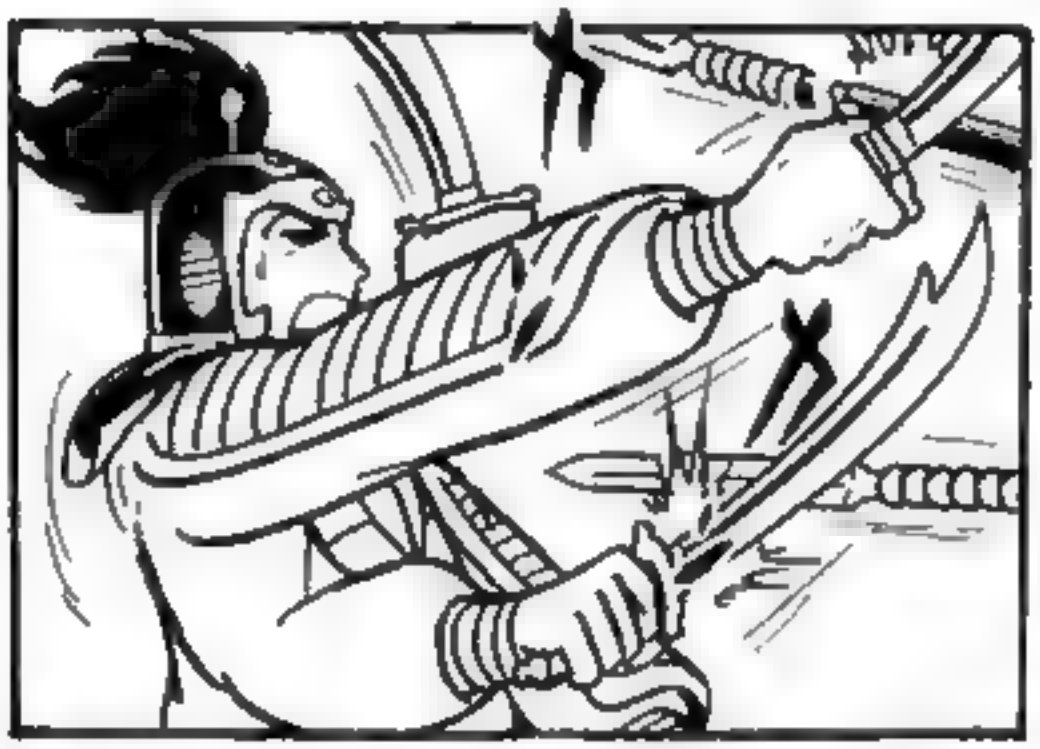
HMPH, NOT BAD. I CAN SEE WHY YOU DARED TO CHALLENGE ME...!

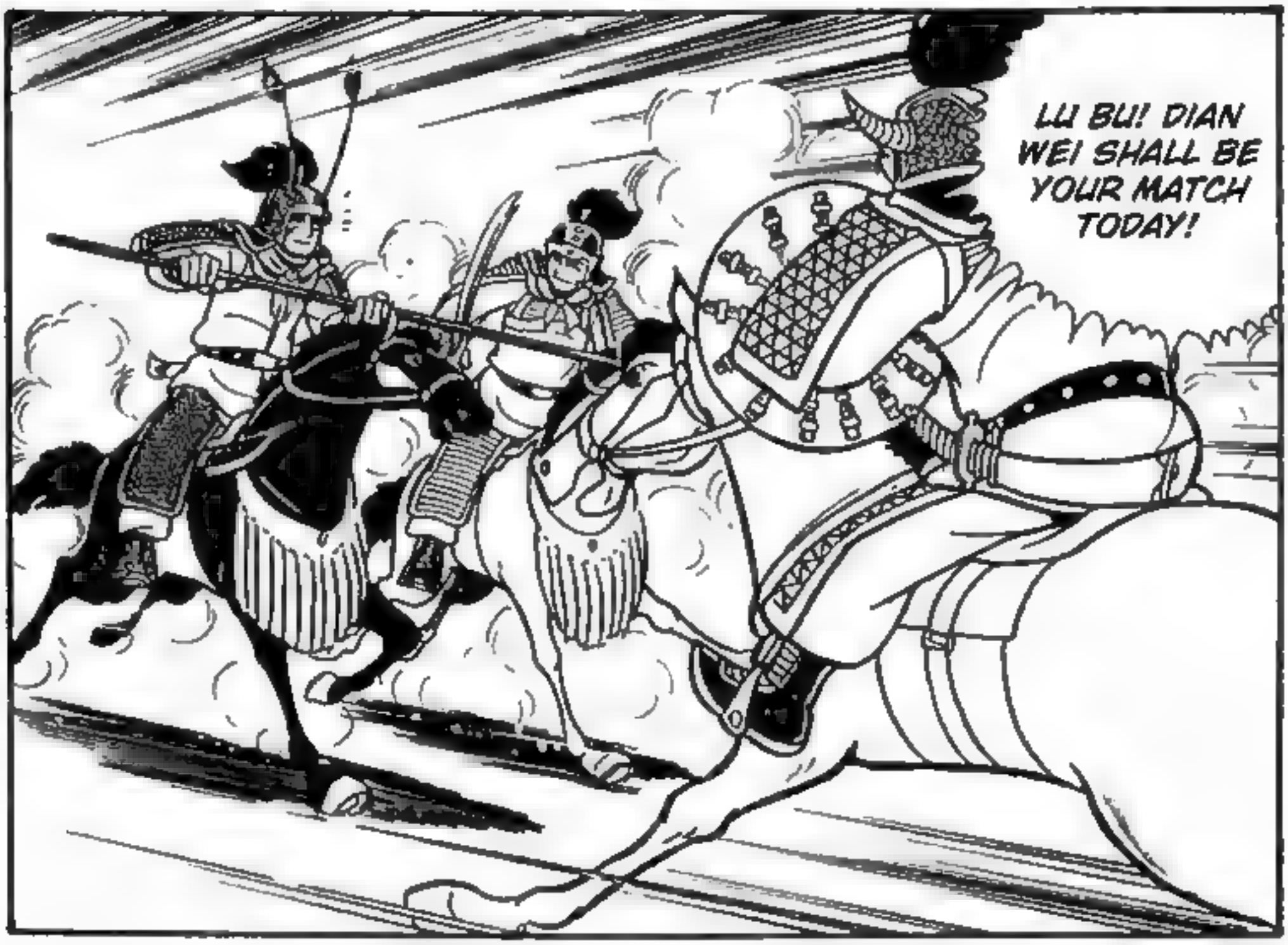



BUT YOU WON'T BE ABLE TO BEST ME WITH THAT MUCH!




HAHH!!!




LU BU! DIAN WEI SHALL BE YOUR MATCH TODAY!

ビュン

I CARE NOT, YOU BOTH CAN FIGHT ME AT THE SAME TIME IF YOU WISH.

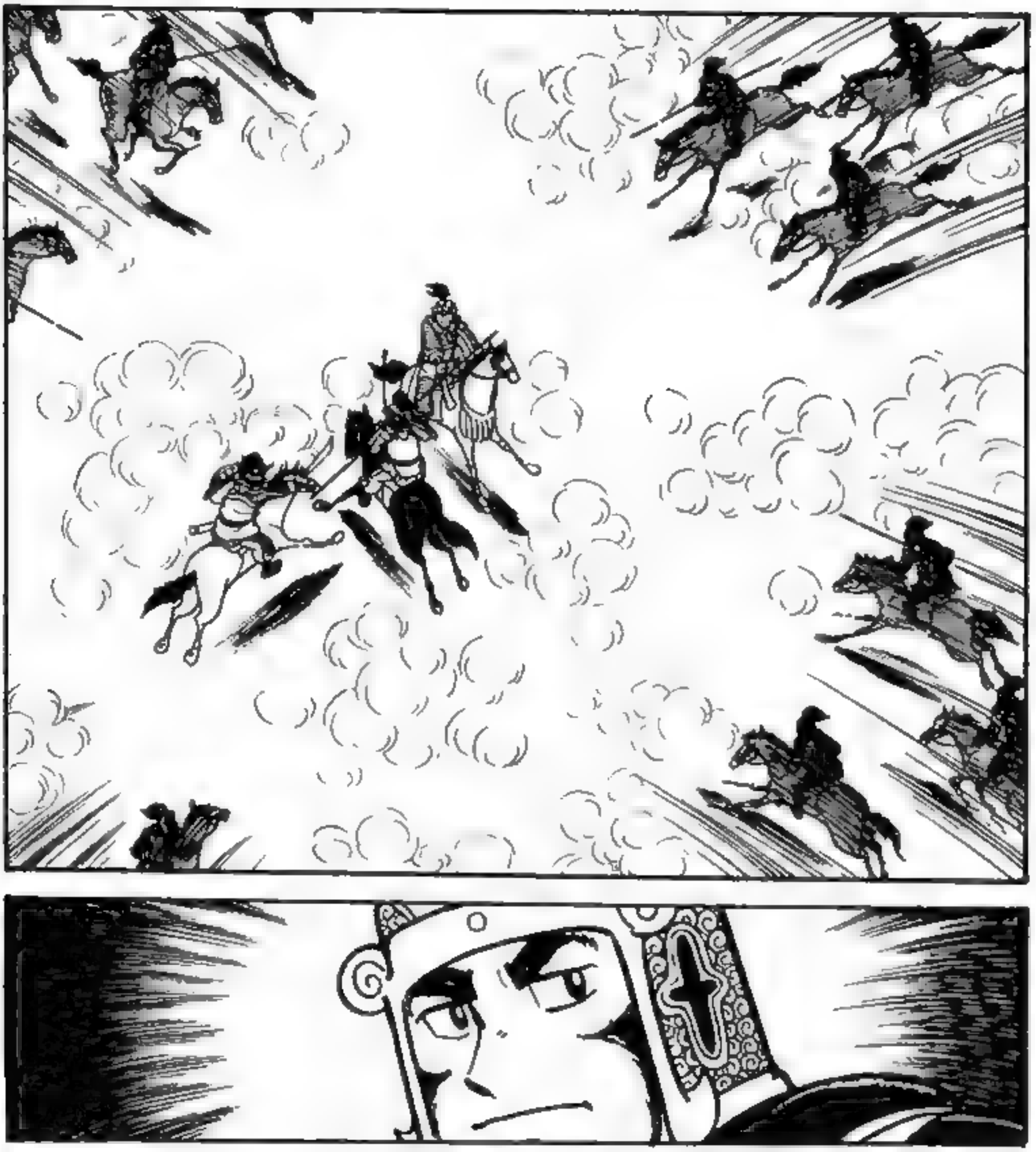
HAHHH!

HE IS SURELY A MAN BORN INTO THIS WORLD SOLELY FOR THE SAKE OF FIGHTING.

WHAT A MAN... TO BE ABLE TO HANDLE BOTH DIAN WEI AND XU CHU WITH SUCH EASE...

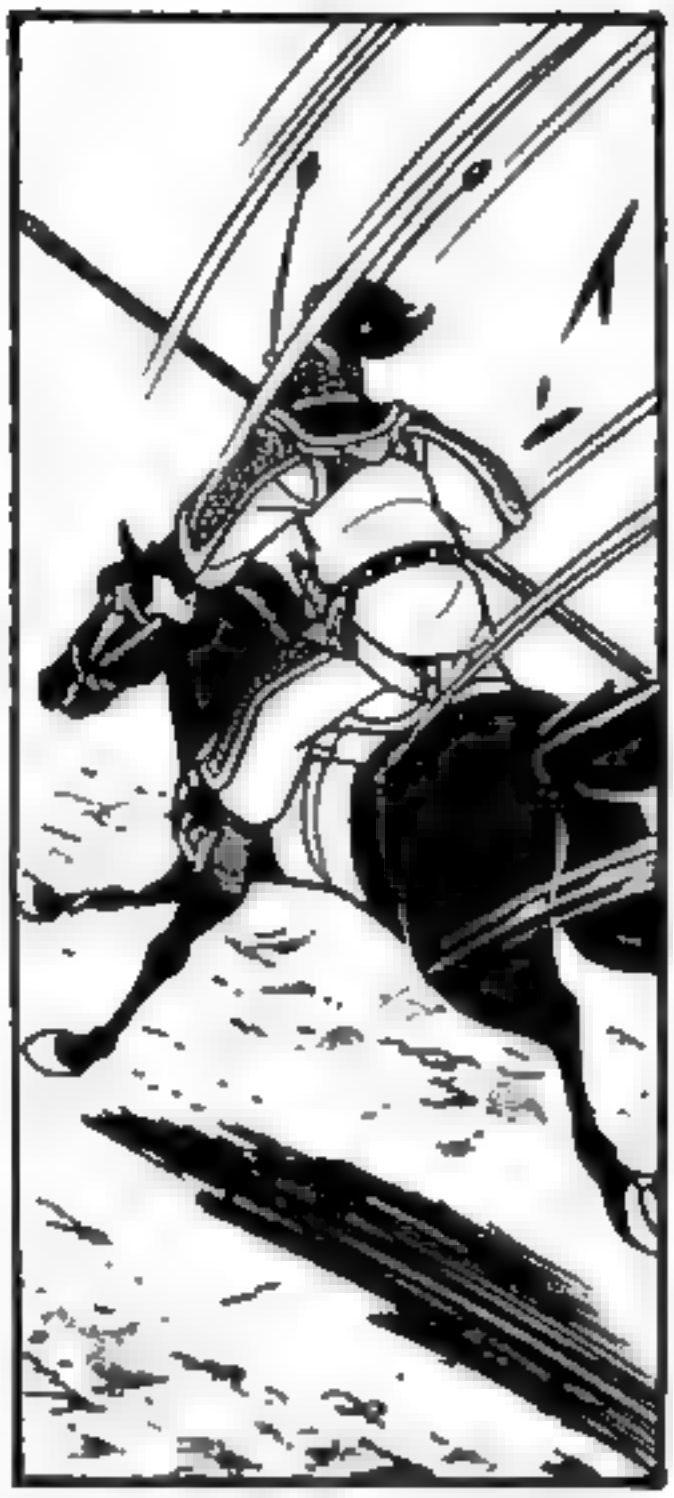
SURROUND LU BU!

IF ONLY LU BU WERE DEALT WITH, THE REST WOULD BE ALL SO EASY.

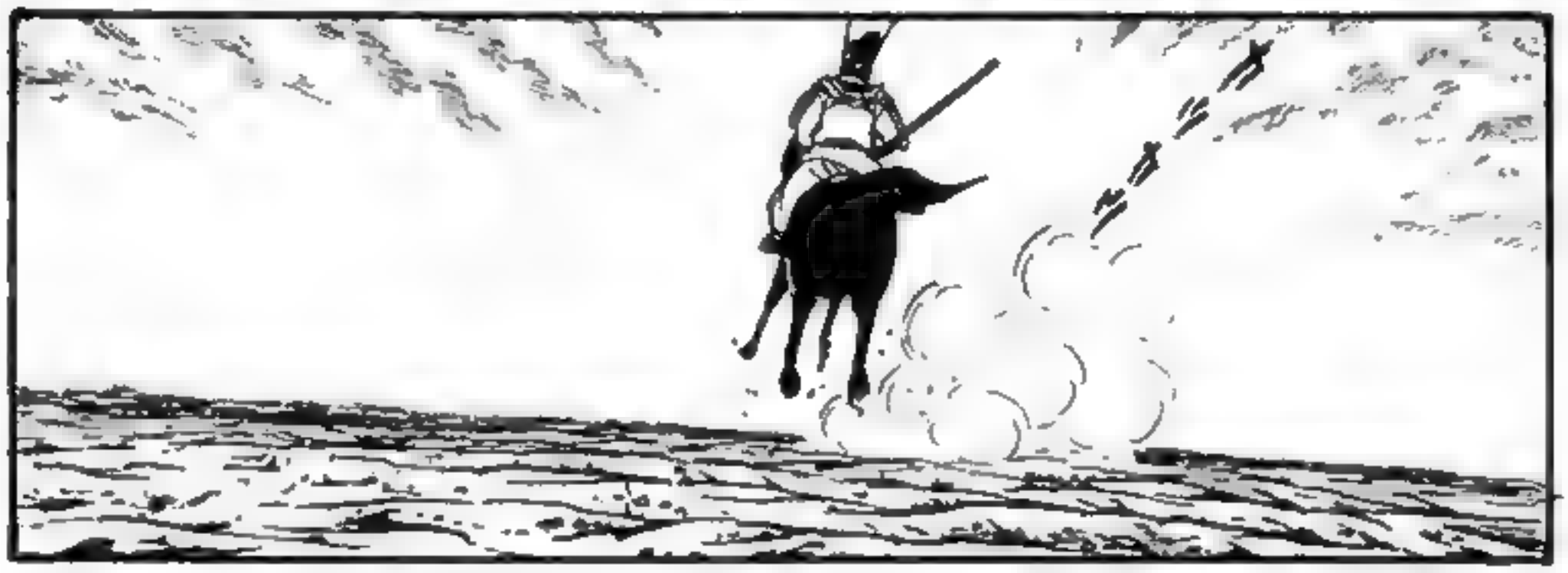


HMPH, IT WOULD BE BEST TO PULL BACK FOR NOW...
ATTACKING ONLY ME...!?

TAKE ME AWAY FROM HERE, MY RED HARE!



YAHH!!



DON'T LET HIM ESCAPE!

SO THAT'S THE RED HARE SAID TO BE ABLE TO RUN A 1000LI IN A SINGLE DAY...

IT'S FUTILE... HE'S TOO FAST.

HMM!?

WHAT'S THE MATTER! LOWER THE DRAWBRIDGE AT ONCE!

DO YOU NOT HEAR ME!? LOWER THE DRAWBRIDGE AND OPEN THE GATES IMMEDIATELY!!!

GAHAHAHA!

JUST WHAT ARE YOU TRYING TO PULL HERE!?

THE TIAN FAMILY!?

I DO NOT RECALL MY FAMILY EVER BEING A PART OF YOUR ARMY, LU BU.

JUDGING FROM HERE, IT SEEMS THAT CAO CAO'S FORCES ARE STRONGER.

WHAT!?

NNGHH...!

AND SO IT WOULD BE MUCH MORE ADVANTAGEOUS FOR MY FAMILY TO HAND OVER PUYANG TO CAO CAO.

TOO SLOW!

CURSES ...!

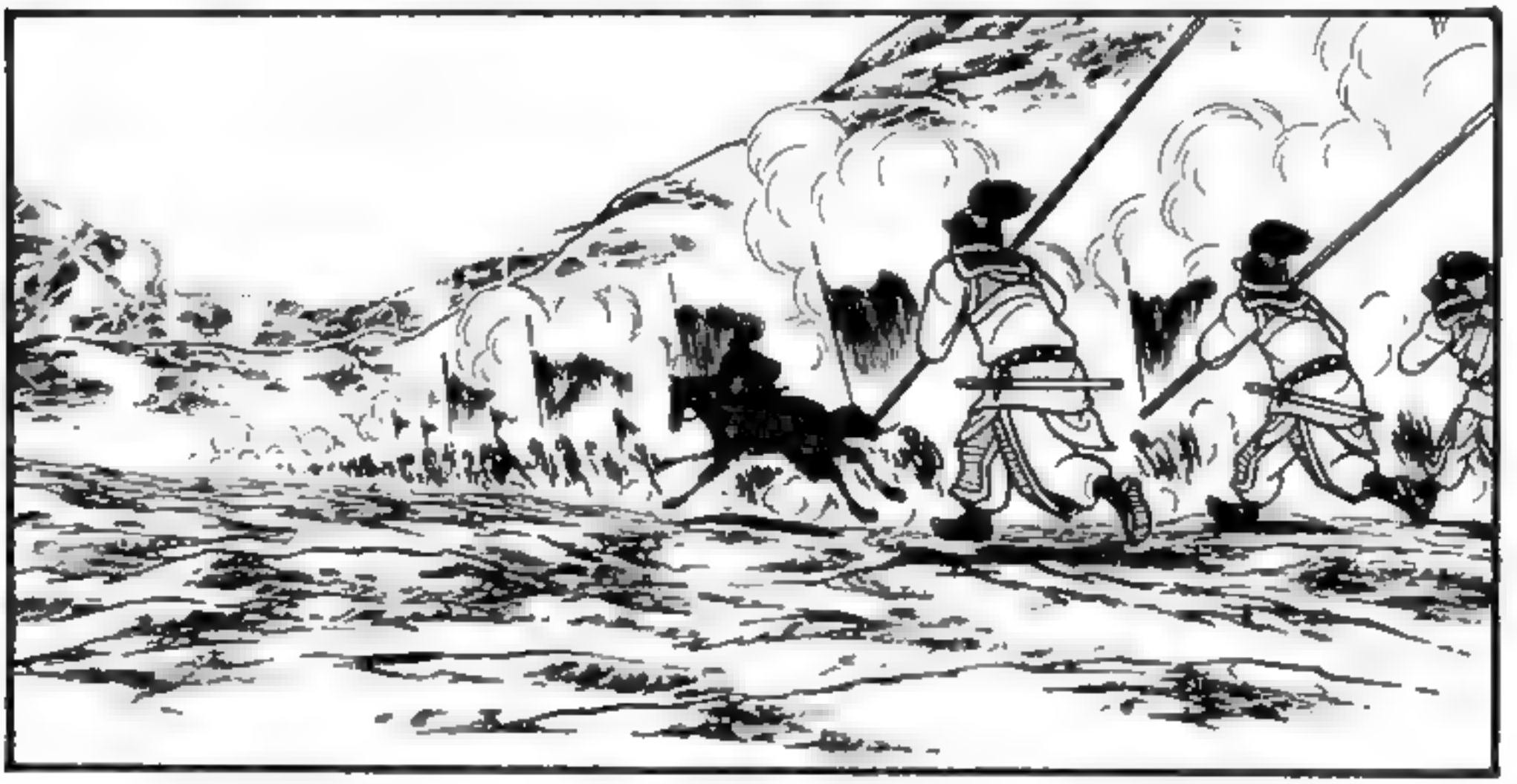
I WOULD RATHER AVOID BEING HIT BY YOUR ARROW IF POSSIBLE. HAHAHAHA!

SIR, I SUGGEST WE RETREAT SOMEPLACE ELSE SINCE IT'S COME TO THIS.

FINE, LET US FIND SOME-WHERE ELSE TO GO FOR THE TIME BEING.

CAO CAO'S FORCES ARE HEADED THIS WAY EVEN AS WE SPEAK, SIR!!!

LET US DEPART!



IT IS TO BE EXPECTED THAT THERE WILL BE SOME DESERTERS ONCE WE'VE LOST OUR SOLE SAFEHOLD.

OUR FORCES HAVE SHRUNKEN A FAIR BIT.

BUT THAT MIGHT BE BEST AS WE DO NOT HAVE ENOUGH FOOD TO SUPPORT OUR NUMBERS AS IT IS.

TRUE...

THE NUMBER OF DESERTERS WILL ONLY INCREASE IN THE NEXT FEW DAYS, SIR.

BUT WE CANNOT JUST WANDER AROUND LIKE THIS FOREVER.

THEN I SHALL SEND A MESSENGER TO YUAN SHAO AT ONCE, SIR.

PERHAPS YUAN SHAO MIGHT AGREE TO SHELTER US.

JIZHOU

WHAT DO YOU MEN THINK?

LU BU ASKS IF HE COULD STAY IN JIZHOU.

HE WILL CERTAINLY ATTEMPT TO OVER-TAKE JIZHOU FROM MY LORD AT THE FIRST OPPORTUNE MOMENT.

NOT ONLY DID HE KILL 2 OF HIS FOSTER-FATHERS, BUT HE ALSO ATTACKED YANZHOU AS SOON AS CAO CAO LEFT IT.

SIR, LU BU MAY BE A MIGHTY WARRIOR BUT HE IS A WILD WOLF AT THE SAME TIME.

MY LORD, IT WOULD BE BEST TO KILL SUCH A SAVAGE MAN.

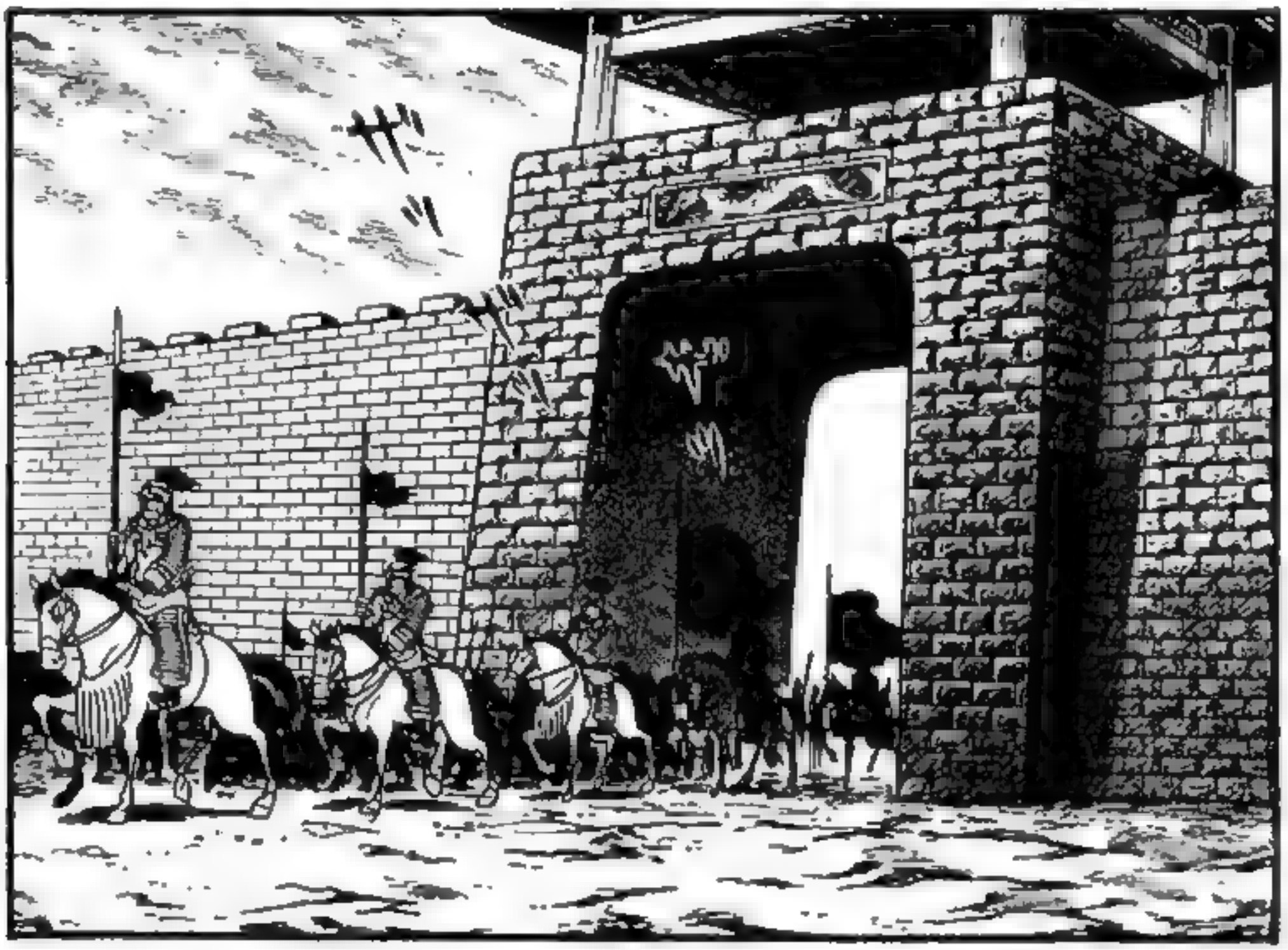
YES... HE CERTAINLY IS AN UNTRUST-WORTHY MAN.

BY DOING SO, SIR WILL MAKE CAO CAO INTO A CLOSE ALLY.

I SAY WE SEND OUT AN ARMY OF 50,000 TO ASSIST CAO CAO IN HUNTING DOWN LU BU.

SEND OUT THE ARMY AT ONCE!

YES, THAT IS A FINE IDEA.



URGENT REPORT, SIR!

WHAT!?

YUAN SHAO HAS DISPATCHED AN ARMY OF 50,000 TO DESTROY OUR FORCES!

WHAT IS IT?

FINE, I SHALL FACE HIM HEAD ON!

THAT DESPICABLE YUAN SHAO DID WHAT...!?

OUR HANDS ARE FULL JUST DEALING WITH CAO CAO'S ARMY. WE HAVE NO HOPES OF WINNING BY TAKING ON CAO CAO AND YUAN SHAO'S ARMY TOGETHER.

PLEASE CALM DOWN, SIR!

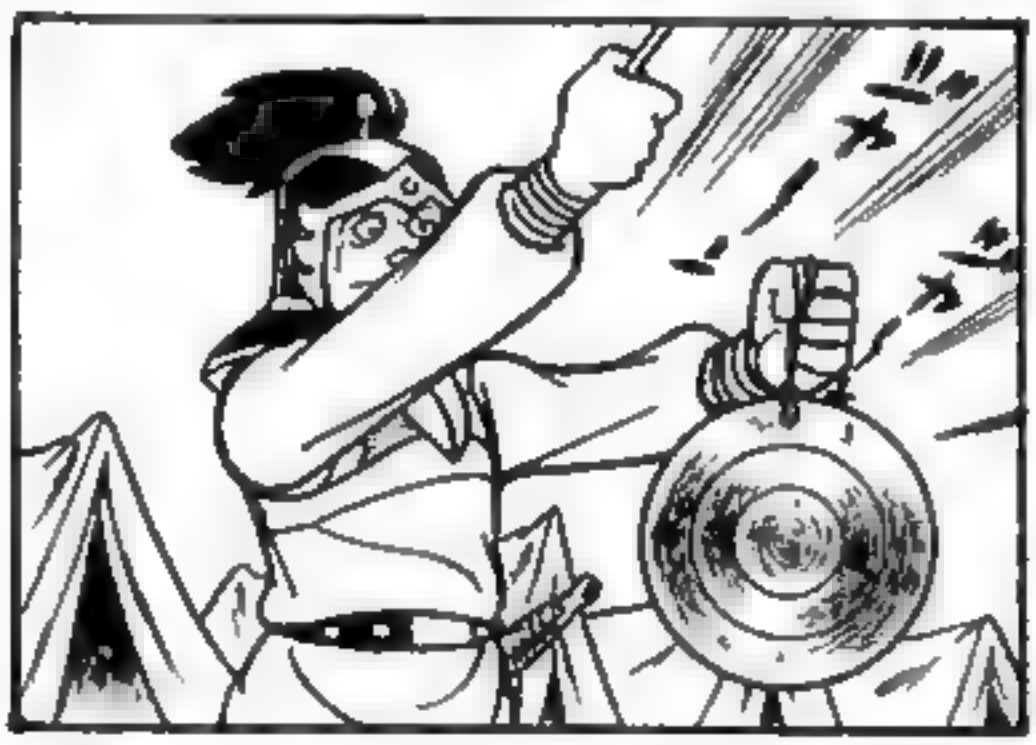
WE MUST RETREAT SOMEPLACE ELSE FOR THE TIME BEING...

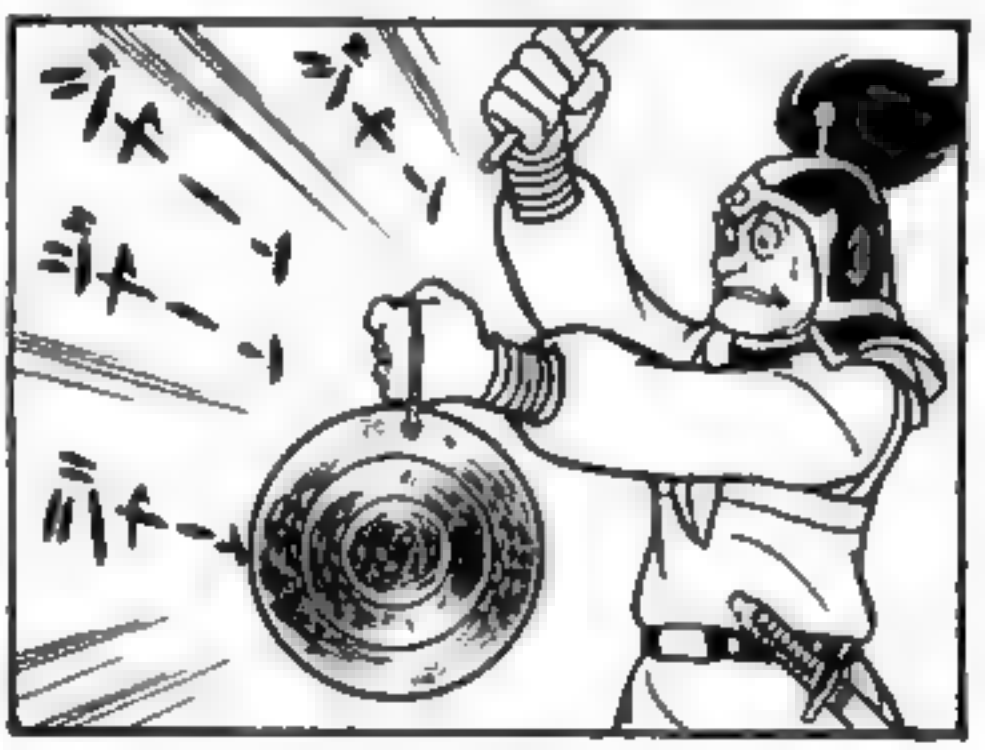
DAMN IT ALL!

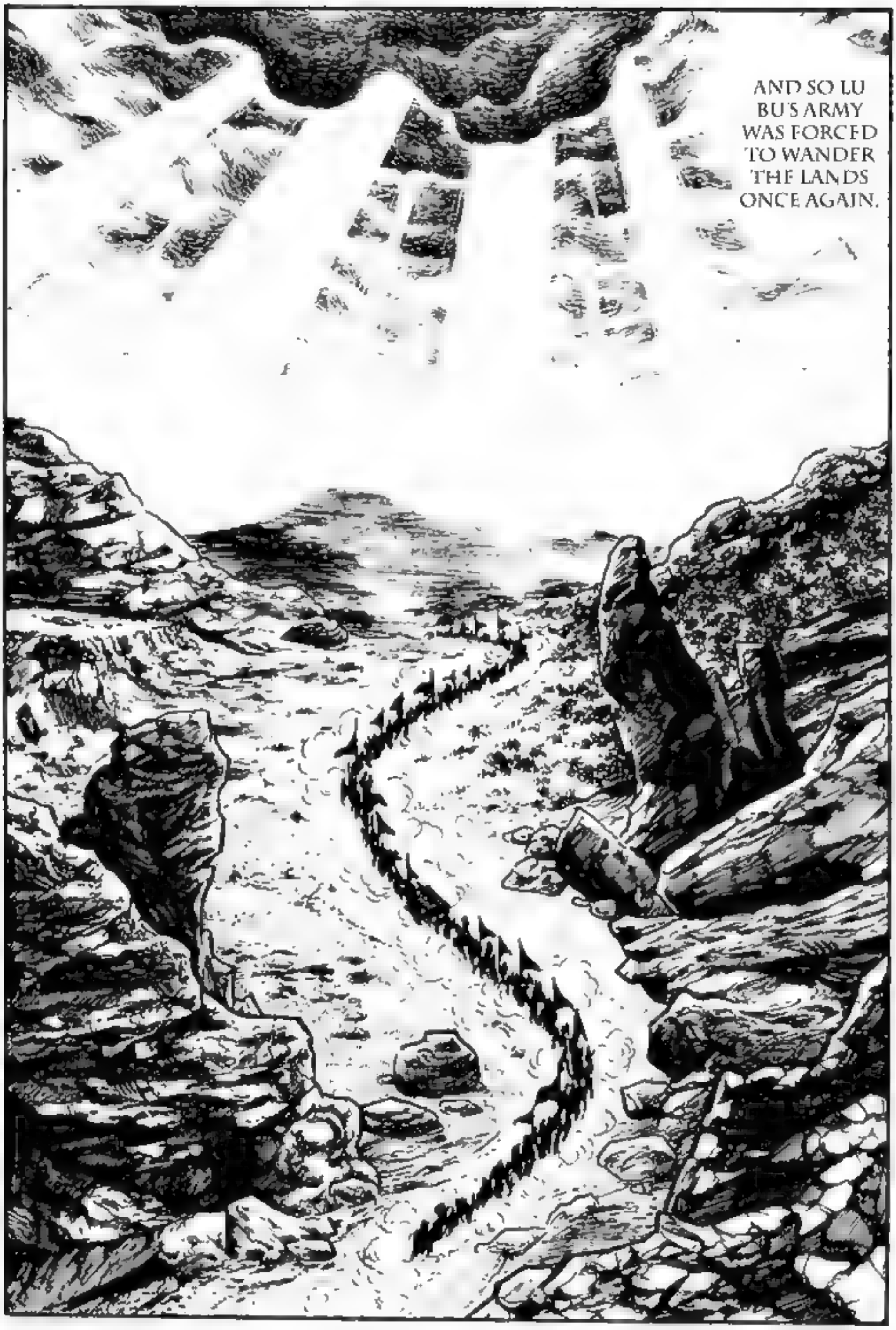
MAKE THE PREPARA-TIONS TO MOVE ONCE AGAIN.

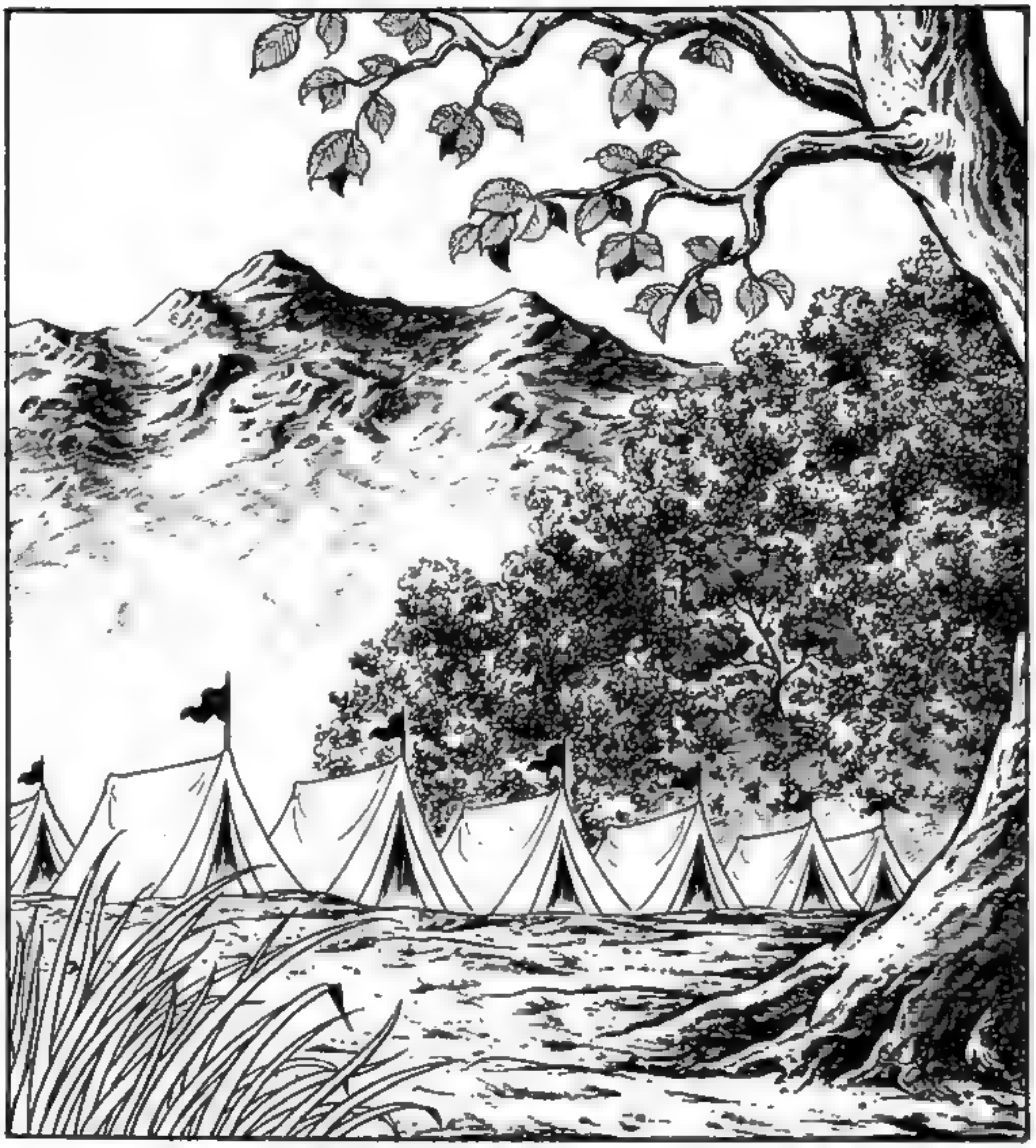
YES... I KNOW....

SIR, IT IS ONLY NATURAL FOR ONE TO BE MET WITH BAD LUCK EVERY NOW AND THEN. BUT WE MUST PERSERVERE AND BIDE OUR TIME UNTIL THE TIDES TURN OUR WAY ONCE MORE.






AND SO LU BU'S ARMY WAS FORCED TO WANDER THE LANDS ONCE AGAIN.



TO THINK MY MIGHTY ARMY OF TENS OF THOUSANDS WOULD DWINDLE DOWN TO THIS...

UNFORTUNATELY YES, SIR. THERE ARE MORE DESERTERS WITH EACH DAY.

IS THIS ALL THAT'S LEFT?

ISN'T THERE SOMEPLACE WE CAN GO TO?

THINGS WILL ONLY GET WORSE AT THIS RATE.

HE IS A SAID TO BE A VIRTUOUS, REPUTABLE MAN, SIR.

HMM...

LIU BEI XUANDE?

I HAVE HEARD THAT LIU BEI XUANDE HAS RECENTLY BECOME THE GOVERNOR OF XUZHOU. IT MIGHT BE WORTH A TRY TO ASK HIM FOR SHELTER.

YES, SIR.

ALRIGHT, SEND A MESSENGER TO XUZHOU AT ONCE.

XUZHOU
IT IS FROM LU BU.
A LETTER? WHOM MIGHT THAT BE FROM, BROTHER?

IT'S A LETTER ASKING ME IF HE CAN TAKE SHELTER IN XUZHOU.

I AGREE WITH ZHANG FEI I'M SURE ELDER BROTHER IS WELL AWARE OF LU BU'S IMMORAL DEEDS.

YES, I AM AWARE OF THAT.

BROTHER, WHO KNOWS WHAT MIGHT HAPPEN IF YOU LET SOMEONE LIKE HIM IN HERE!?

CAO CAO ONLY AGREED TO MY ARMISTICE AND RETREATED BECAUSE LU BU ATTACKED YANZHOU WHILE CAO CAO WAS AWAY.

BUT I BELIEVE THIS MAY BE FATE.

AND THAT VERY LU BU IS NOW ASKING FOR MY HELP... I CANNOT HELP BUT FEEL THAT THIS IS ALL DUE TO FATE.

IF IT WEREN'T FOR LU BU, XUZHOU WOULD HAVE BEEN DESTROYED.

I DEFINITELY OBJECT TO THIS TOO!

EVEN SO, I CANNOT AGREE CONSIDERING LU BU'S NATURE.

I AM THINKING OF GIVING HIM A WARM WELCOME.

XUANDE IS NOT SUCH A TWO-FACED MAN.

IT IS STILL HARD TO BELIEVE THAT LIU BEI HAS AGREED TO WELCOME ME. ARE YOU SURE HE MIGHT NOT SEND OUT HIS ARMY TO GREET ME INSTEAD LIKE YUAN SHAO?

HMM?

THAT MAN IS LIU BEI XUANDE, SIR.

WELCOME, GENERAL LU BU.

I HAVE COME OUT TO GREET SIR WITH RESPECT.

SIR WOULD GIVE A MAN LIKE ME SUCH A WARM WELCOME...

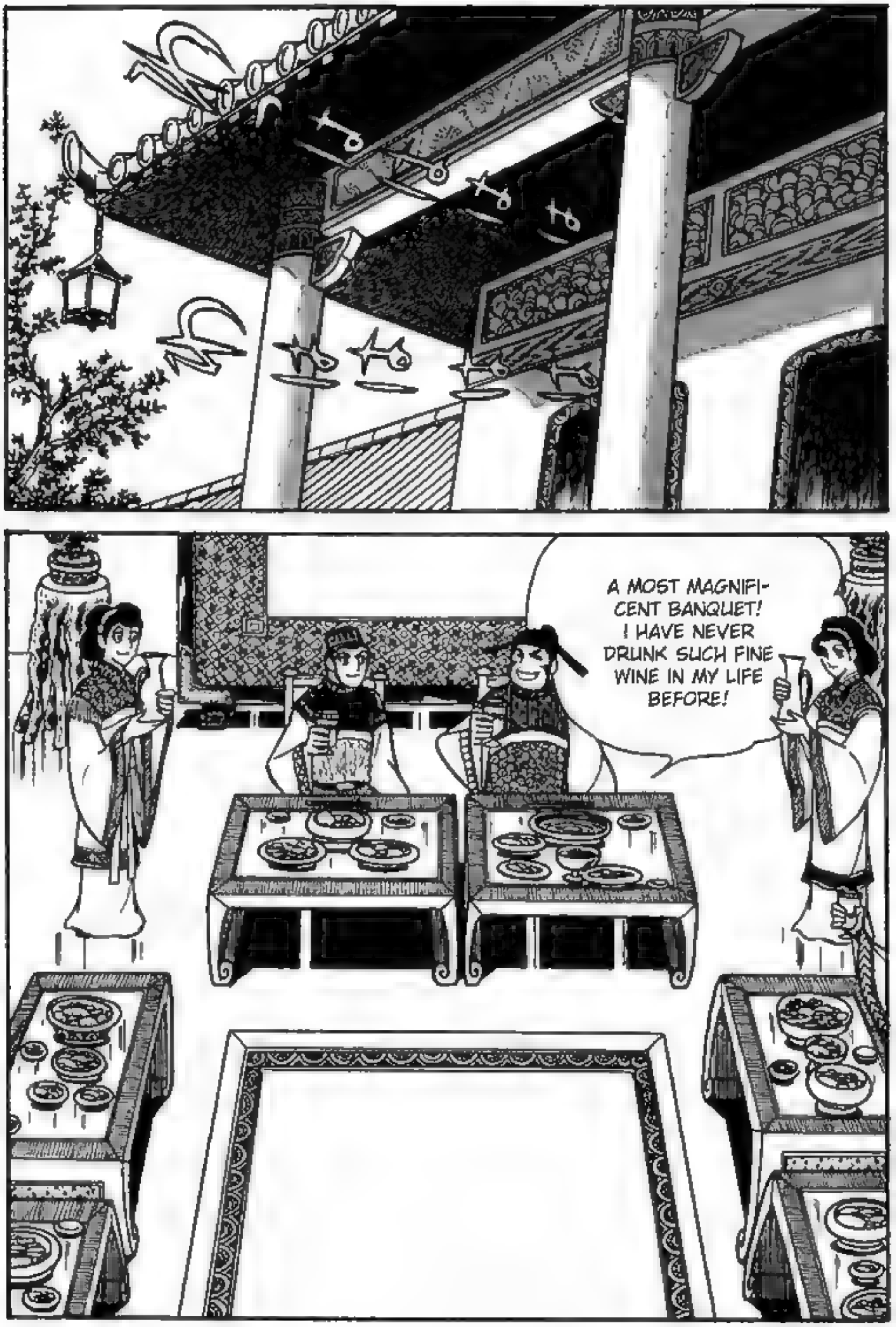
T-TO THINK...

I HAVE LONG RESPECTED THE GENERAL'S BRAVERY. IT PAINED MY HEART TO HEAR THAT SIR WAS WANDERING THESE LANDS IN SEARCH FOR A SAFE SHELTER.

I AM INDEBTED TO YOU.

PLEASE COME IN. I HOPE XUZHOU WILL PROVE TO BE A SAFE PLACE FOR SIR.

HMPH, WHAT A BOTHER! OUR BROTHER IS JUST TOO NICE FOR HIS OWN GOOD SOMETIMES...!


A MOST MAGNIFI-
CENT BANQUET!
I HAVE NEVER
DRUNK SUCH FINE
WINE IN MY LIFE
BEFORE!

HAHA... XUANDE, WE MUST SURELY BE TWO BROTHERS LINKED BY THE STRINGS OF FATE!

IF I HAD NEVER ATTACKED YANZHOU, THEN YOU WOULD NOT BE THE GOVERNOR OF XUZHOU TODAY... HAHAHA!

LU BU! WHAT IMPUDENT MANNERS YOU TREAT YOUR SAVIOUR WITH!

IT WAS ONLY AT TAO QIAN'S INSISTENCE, THAT BROTHER ACCEPTED THE POSITION!

MY BROTHER DID NOT BECOME XUZHOU'S GOVERNOR BECAUSE OF YOU...!

IF YOU CONTINUE TO SPOUT SUCH RUDE AND OUTRAGEOUS CLAIMS, I SHALL CUT OFF YOUR HEAD!

YOU CALL THIS SAVAGE A GUEST...!?

ZHANG FEI! THIS IS NO WAY TO TREAT OUR GUEST!!!

JUST HOW THE FUCK CAN I SLEEP SOUNDLY WITH THIS WOLF INSIDE OUR HOME!!?

WHA...!? BUT DON'T YOU FEEL THE SAME WAY, BROTHER GUAN YU!?

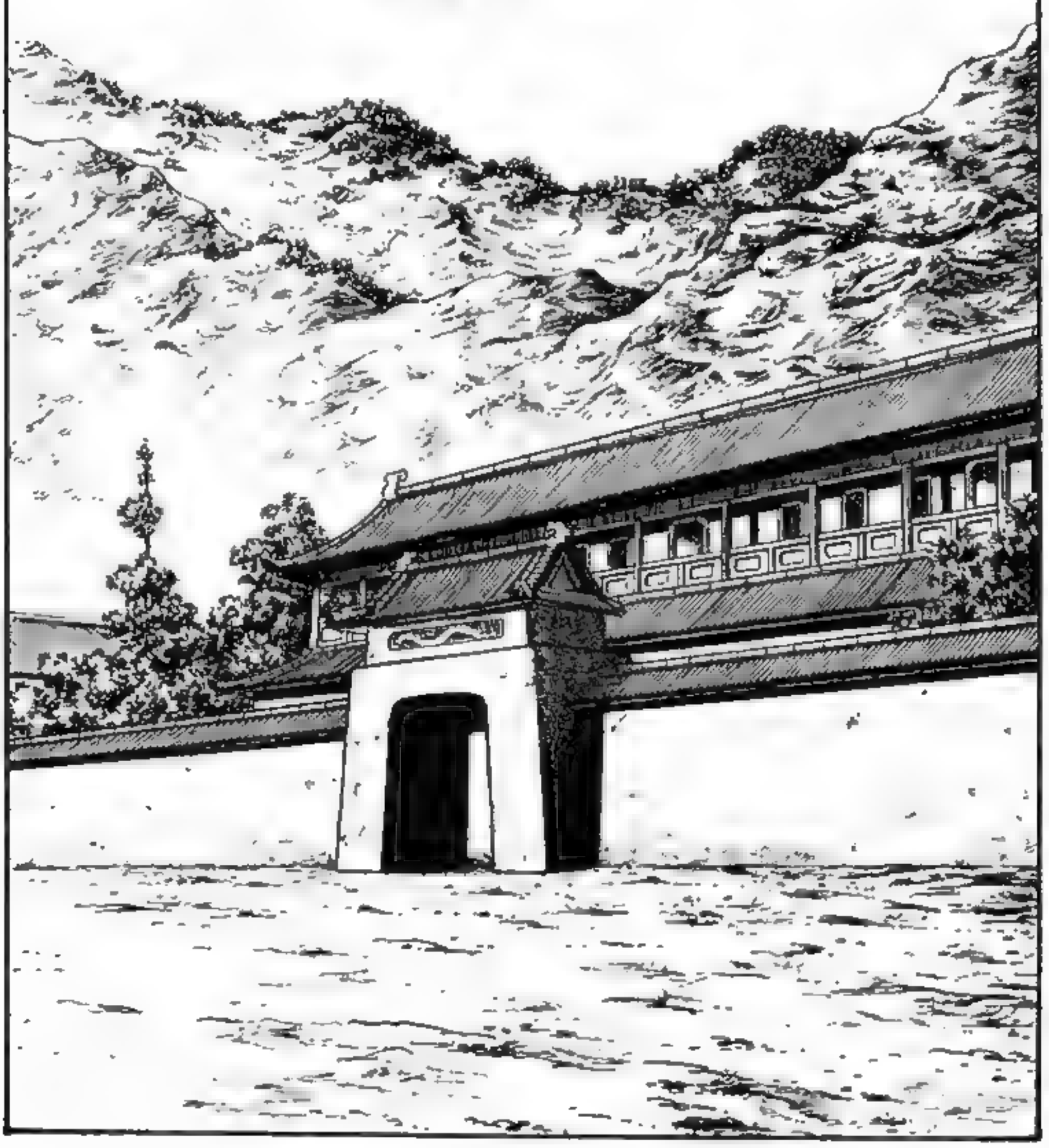
ZHANG FEI, YOU'VE HAD TOO MUCH TO DRINK. YOU SHOULD RETIRE EARLY FOR TONIGHT.

I SAID COME, ZHANG FEI!

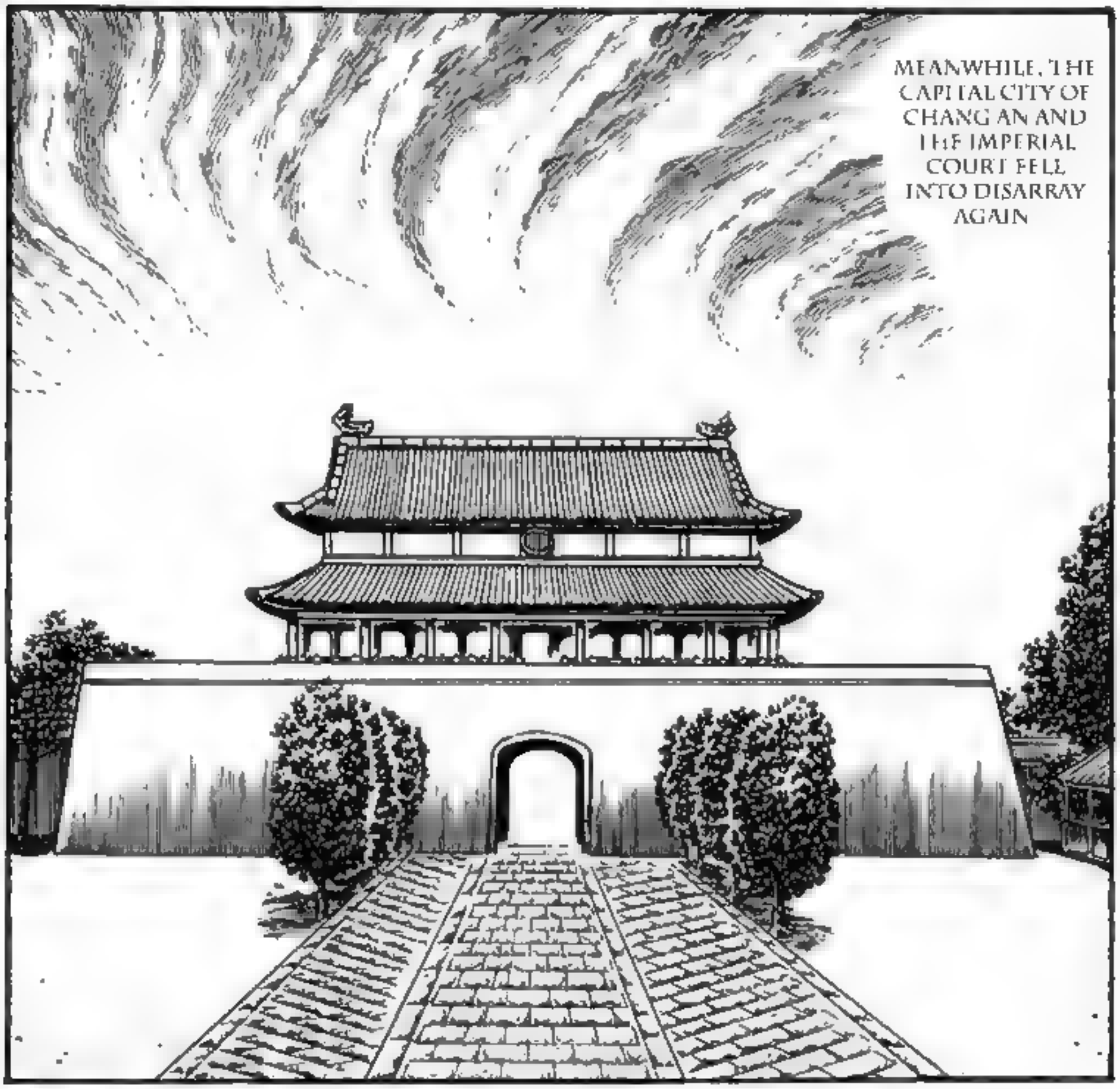
PLEASE FORGIVE MY YOUNGER BROTHER... HE IS RATHER IRRATIONAL WHEN HE DRINKS...

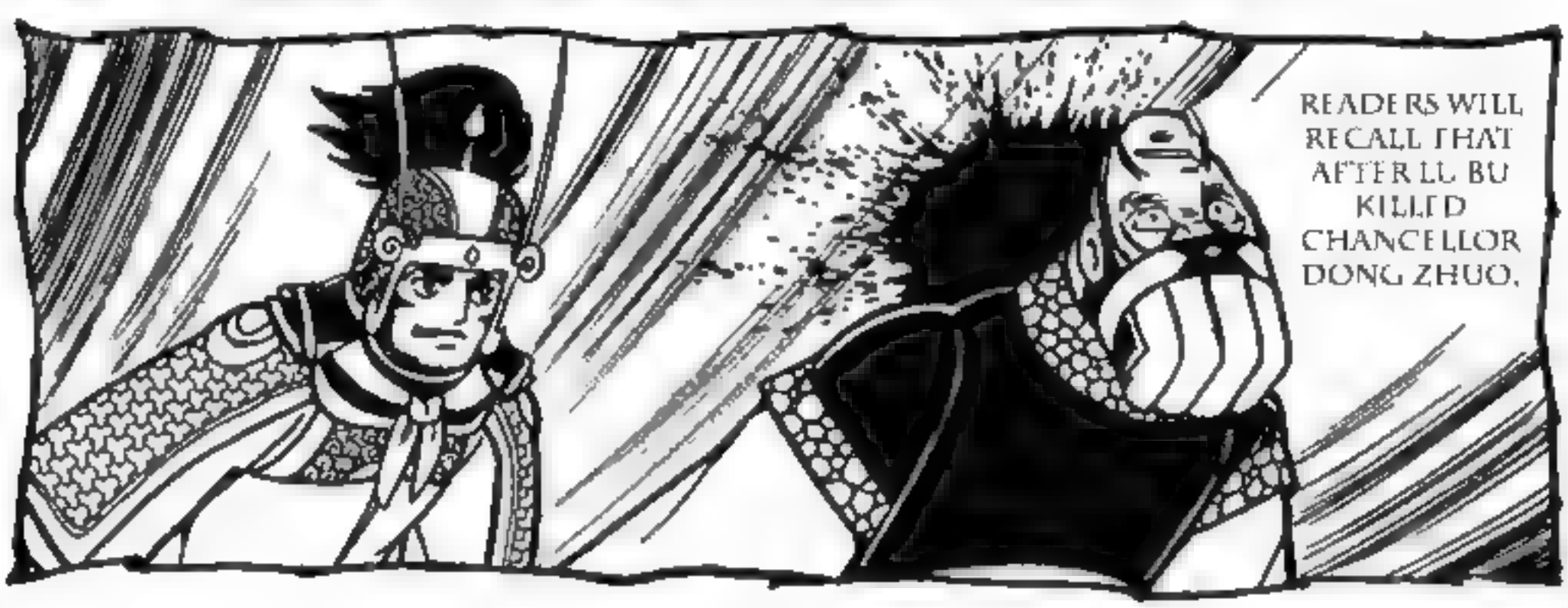
NO, NO, THERE'S NO NEED TO APOLOGIZE AT ALL. WE ALL ACT A LITTLE DIFFERENTLY UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF ALCOHOL.

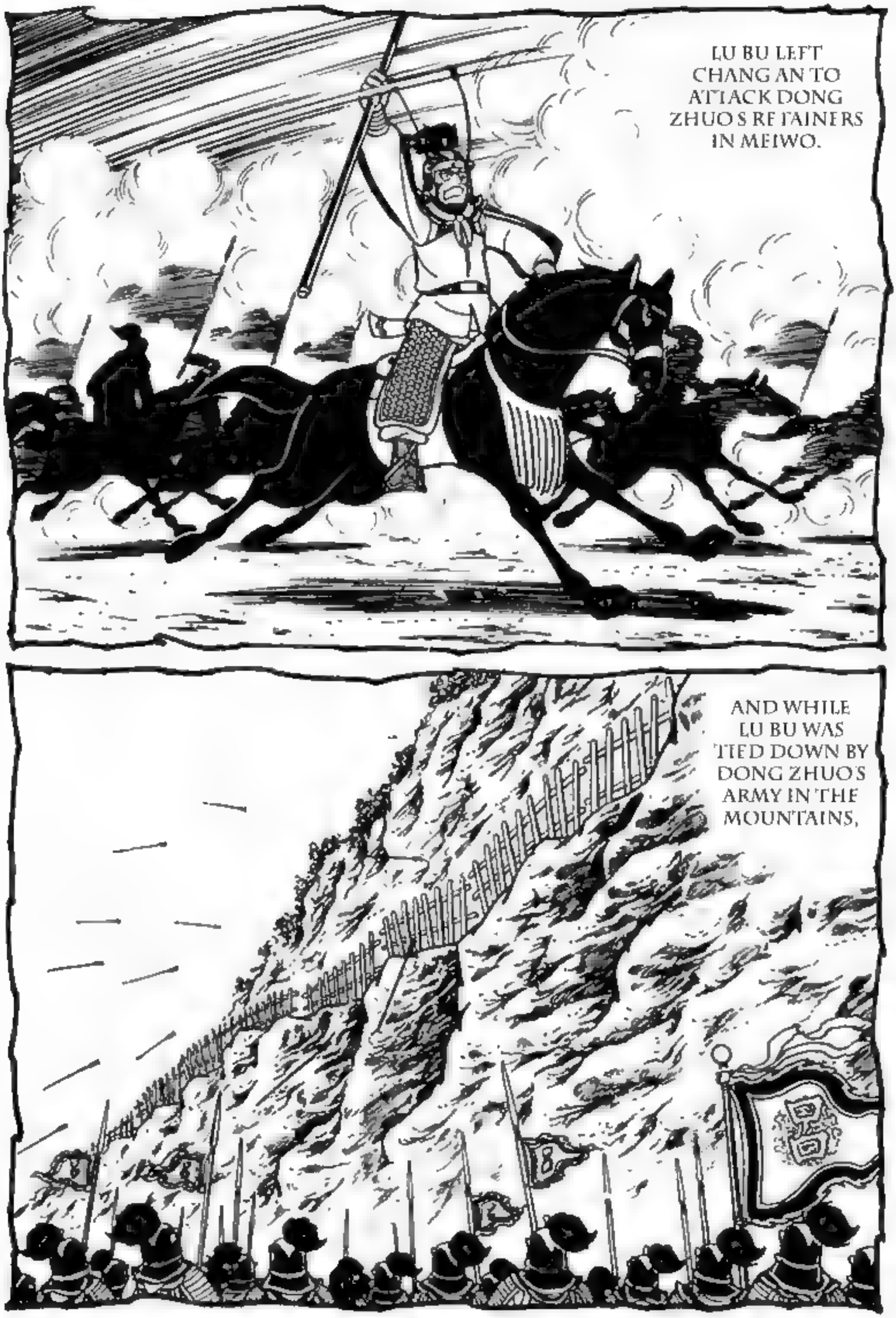
AND SO LU BU'S WANDERING ARMY HAD FOUND A SHELTER AT LAST IN LIU BEI'S XUZHOU. WHETHER INVITING LU BU WOULD TURN OUT FAVOURABLY OR LEAD TO MISFORTUNE FOR LIU BEI WAS SOMETHING THAT NOBODY KNEW AT THE TIME



ESCAPE FROM CHANG'AN






LU BU LEFT CHANG AN TO ATTACK DONG ZHUO'S RETAINERS IN MEIWO.
AND WHILE LU BU WAS TIED DOWN BY DONG ZHUO'S ARMY IN THE MOUNTAINS,

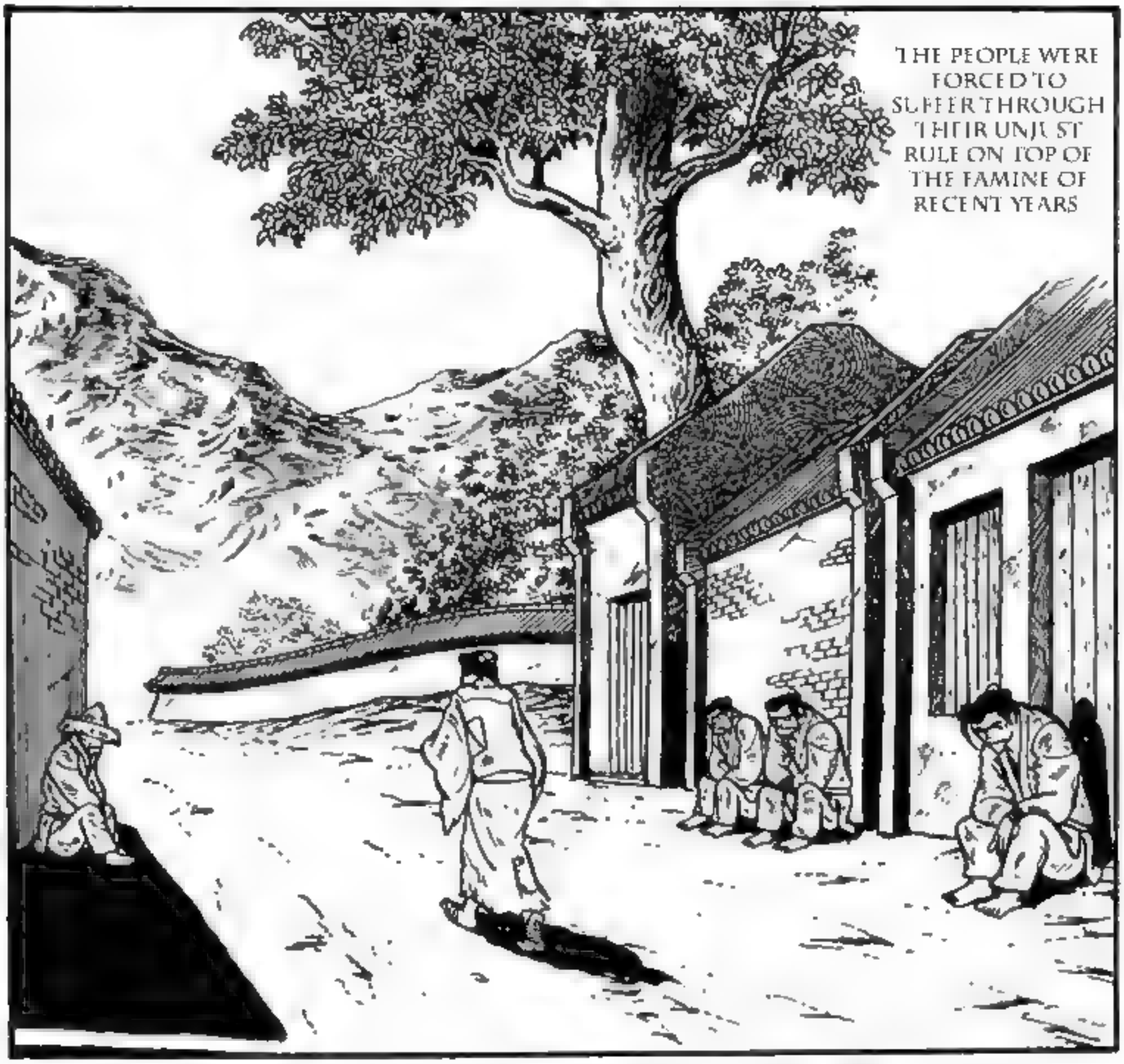
THE ENMIES HAD SPLIT UP INTO TWO, WITH ONE GROUP SECRETLY SNEAKING BEHIND LU BU TO TAKE CONTROL OF CHANG'AN.

AND GUO SI

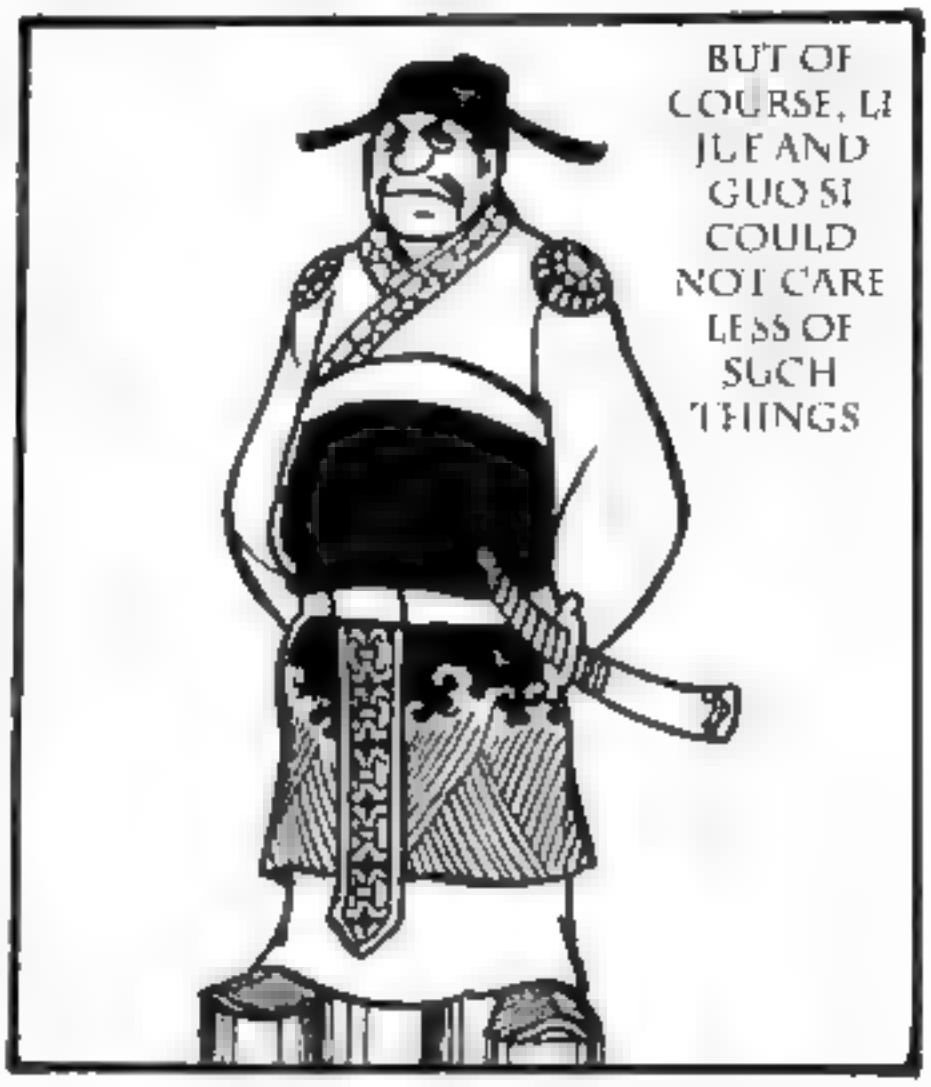
THE TWO COMMANDERS WHO TOOK CONTROL OF DONG ZHUO'S FORMER ARMY WAS GENERAL LI JUE,

THESE TWO GENERALS NOW TOOK CONTROL OF THE IMPERIAL COURT AND CHANG AN. THOUGH THE PEOPLE HOPED FOR A NEW BEGINNING, THIS WAS UNFORTUNATELY NOT THE CASE

LI JUE AND GUO SI'S CONDUCTS WERE AS ABOMINABLE AS DONG ZHUO'S


THE PEOPLE WERE FORCED TO SUFFER THROUGH THEIR UNJUST RULE ON TOP OF THE FAMINE OF RECENT YEARS

THE ENDLESS GREED OF HUMAN BEINGS WERE EXEMPLIFIED BY THESE TWO INDIVIDUALS IT WAS NOT TO ANYONE'S SURPRISE THAT THEIR UNCHECKED GREED EVENTUALLY CAME INTO CONFLICT


BUT OF COURSE, LI JUE AND GUO SI COULD NOT CARE LESS OF SUCH THINGS

UNWILLING TO COMPROMISE, THE TWO RESORTED TO FIGHTING OPENLY OUT IN THE CITY OVER AND OVER AGAIN

HMM... IS THERE NO WAY TO GET THE UPPER HAND?

NO, SIR. THEY ARE AS PERSISTENT AS EVER.

HAS GUO SI'S ARMY SHOWN ANY NEW ACTIVITIES?

I HAVE A PLAN TO PROPOSE, SIR.

BY DOING SO, GUO SI AND HIS ARMY WILL BE REDUCED TO NOTHING MORE THAN MERE REBELS.

SIR SHOULD GAIN THE EMPEROR'S SUPPORT.

HMM, SOUNDS LIKE IT COULD WORK...

YES, SIR.

ALRIGHT, BRING THE EMPEROR FROM THE PALACE TO THIS MEIWO AT ONCE!

BARGING IN HERE WITH ARMED SOLDIERS IS FORBIDDEN!

THIS IS THE IMPERIAL PALACE!

AGHH!

NOW IS NOT THE TIME FOR SUCH PETTY RULES!

I AM YOUR HIGHNESS'S FAITHFUL SUBJECT LI JUE AND THESE ARE MY MEN.

GUO SI'S ARMY GROWS WILDER AND MORE VICIOUS BY DAY. I AM AFRAID THE IMPERIAL PALACE WILL NOT REMAIN SAFE FOR MUCH LONGER. PLEASE ALLOW ME TO ESCORT YOUR HIGHNESS TO MEIWO WHERE MY MEN WILL OFFER PROTECTION.

SILENCE!

W-WHAT!? WHAT IMPUDENT ORDER IS THIS!?

YOUR HIGHNESS, THERE IS NO TIME TO WASTE!

YOU MINISTERS WHO ONLY BICKER AMONGST YOURSELVES CAN DO AS YOU WISH! BUT I SHALL CARRY OUT MY DUTY TO KEEP HIS HIGHNESS SAFE!

GRAND COMMANDER GUO SI!

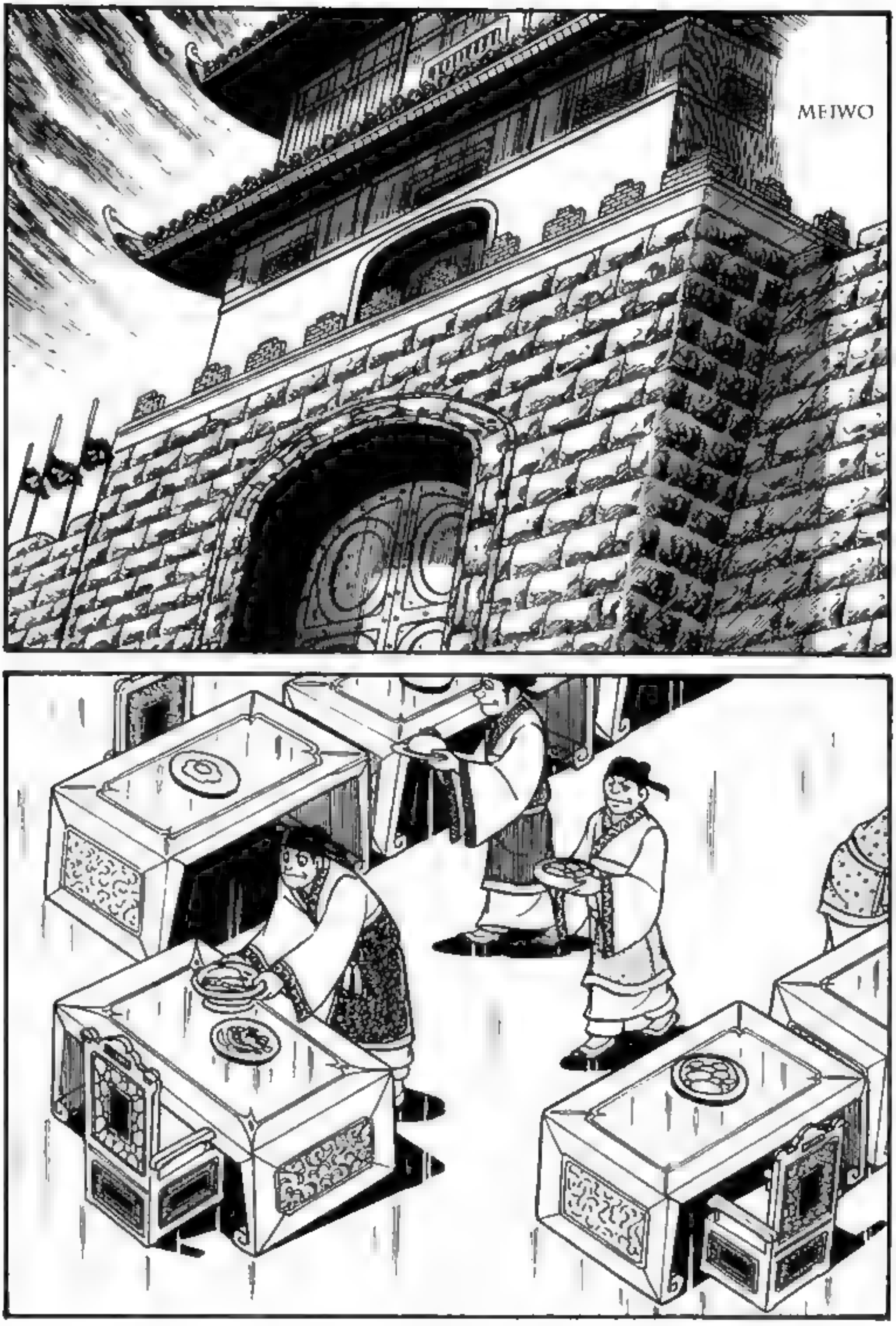
LI JUE HAS TAKEN THE EMPEROR INTO MEIWO!

WHAT IS IT?

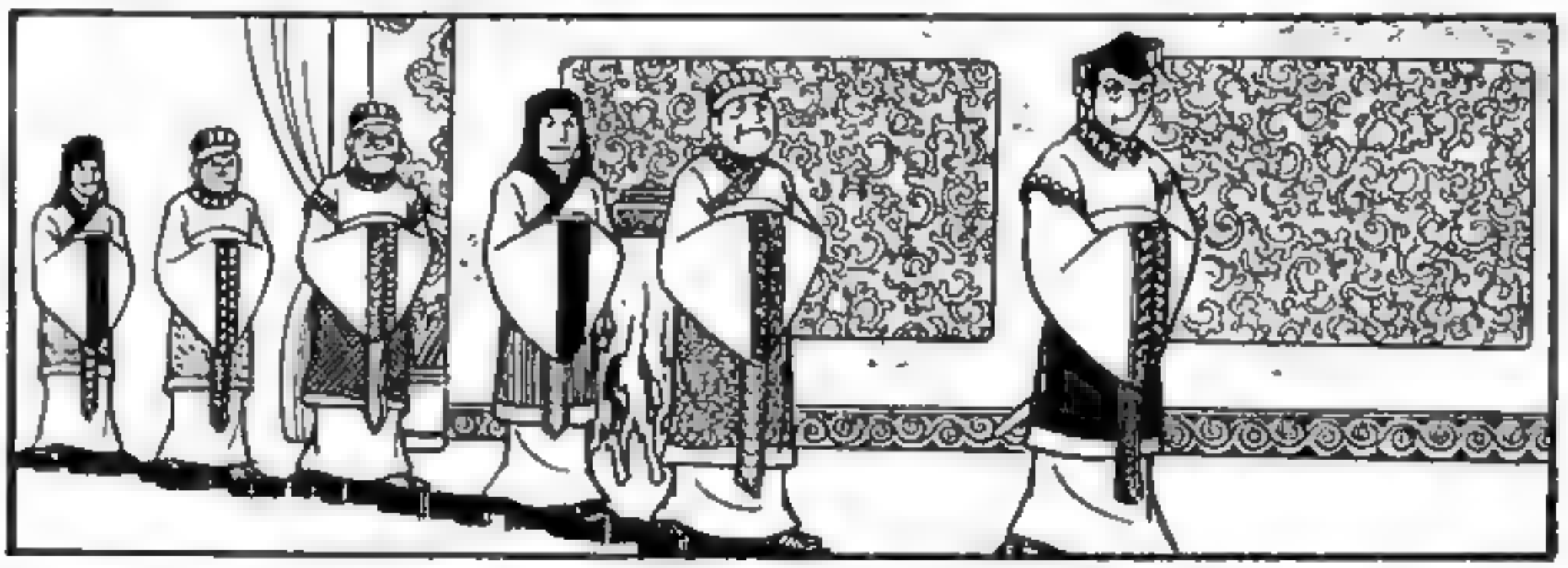
BUT WON'T THAT TURN US INTO... REBELS!?

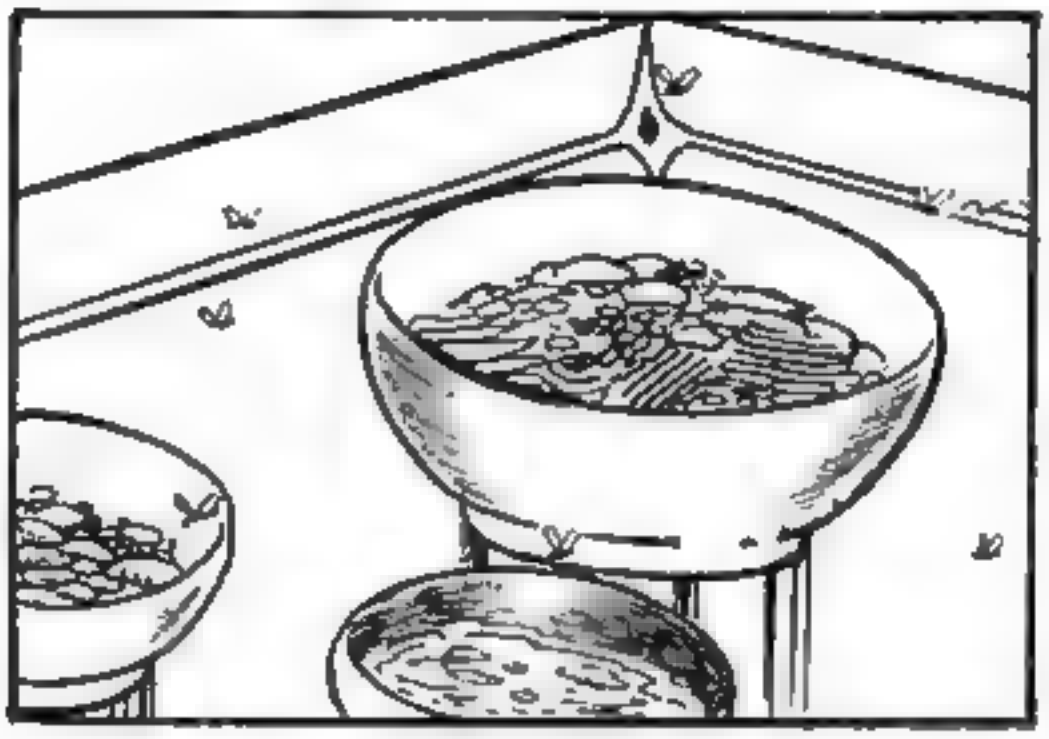
WHAT!?

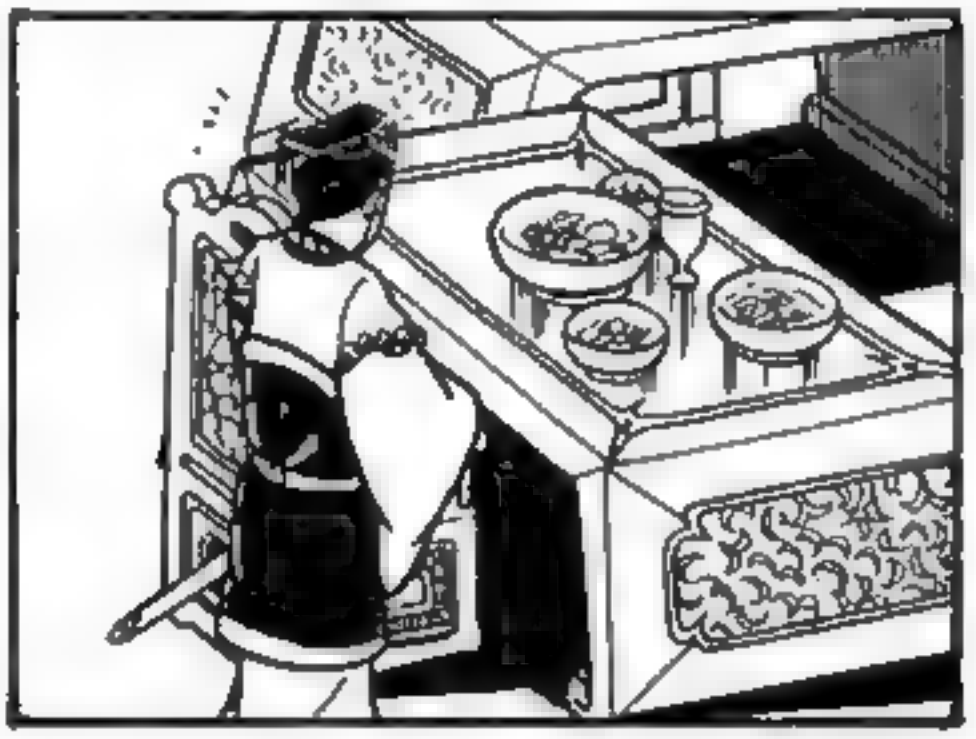
MOBILIZE THE MEN AT ONCE AND TAKE BACK THE EMPEROR!


MEIWO

YOUR HIGHNESS, THE DINNER HAS BEEN PREPARED!







OF COURSE, YOUR HIGHNESS!

...T-THE FOOD APPEARS TO BE ROTTEN.

THE LOCUST SWARMS AND VIOLENT REBELS STILL ROAMING THE LANDS HAVE CAUSED A GREAT FAMINE. WE CANNOT ENJOY LUXURIOUS FOOD IN THESE TROUBLED TIMES. YOUR HIGHNESS SHOULD BE SATISFIED AT THE LONE FACT THAT THERE IS FOOD AT ALL!

HURL!

URP!

SO THIS IS HOW *MY FAITHFUL SUBJECT* LI JUE TREATS ME...

ENOUGH. I SHALL REFRAIN FROM EATING TONIGHT.

HMM?

I SHALL GO SEE WHAT IS CAUSING THE RUCKUS OUTSIDE.

AHHH!

LI JUE! HAND OVER THE EMPEROR OR I SHALL ATTACK!

Y-YOUR HIGHNESS! GUO SI'S ARMY IS OUTSIDE, READY TO CHARGE IN!

!

HE IS DEMANDING LI JUE TO HAND OVER YOUR HIGHNESS!

NONE OF THEM CARE THE SLIGHTEST FOR THE PEOPLE.

JUST WHAT DO YOU GENTLEMEN SUGGEST I DO?

LI JUE, GUO SI... BOTH MEN ARE ONLY USING ME TO OBTAIN MORE POWER.

AS YOUR HIGHNESS SAYS, BOTH LI JUE AND GUO SI ARE NOTHING BUT CORRUPT POWER-HUNGRY MEN. I BELIEVE IT WOULD BE BEST FOR YOUR HIGHNESS TO ESCAPE FROM HERE.

THERE JUST SO HAPPENS TO BE A SECRET EXIT OUT THROUGH THE BACK, YOUR HIGHNESS.

BUT TO ESCAPE...? IS THAT EVEN POSSIBLE WITH GUO SI'S ARMY OUTSIDE?

YES, YOUR HIGHNESS

ALRIGHT, MAKE THE PREPARATIONS TO ESCAPE.

NOW WOULD BE THE BEST CHANCE TO ESCAPE WHILE LI JUE IS PREOCCUPIED WITH GUO SI'S ARMY.

WHAT IS IT?

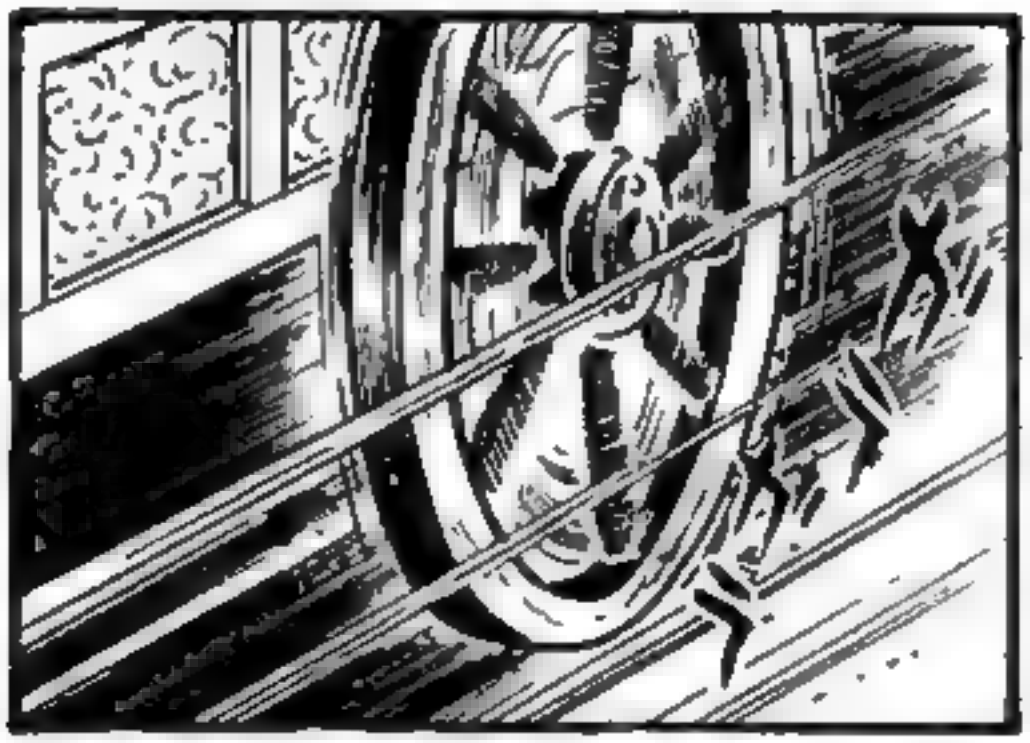
THE PREPARATIONS TO ESCAPE ARE COMPLETE, THERE IS NO TIME TO WASTE, YOUR HIGHNESS.

YOUR HIGHNESS, YOUR HIGHNESS!

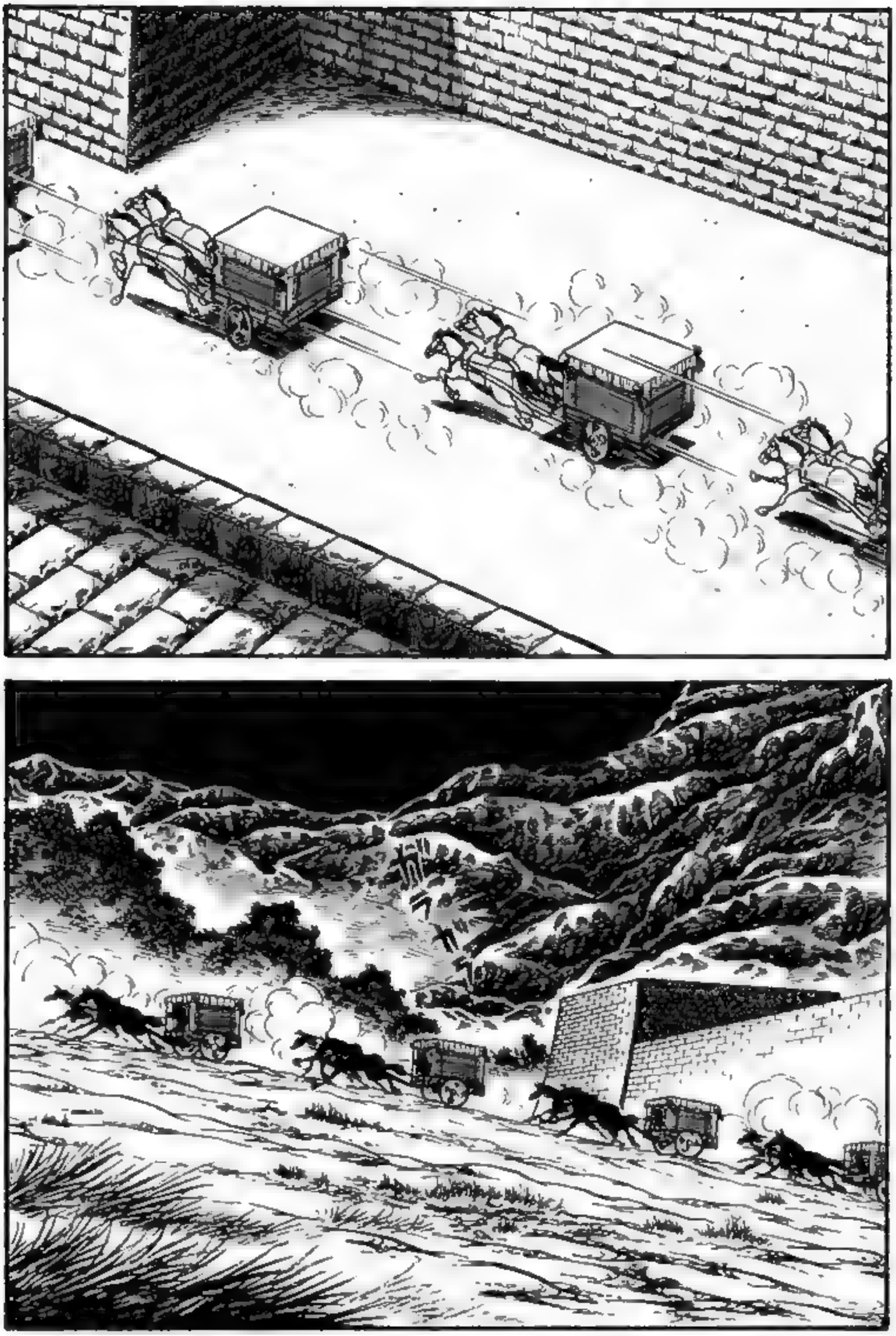
WE GAVE THEM PLENTY TO DRINK SO THEY SHOULD BE FAST ASLEEP, YOUR HIGHNESS.

WHAT OF THE NIGHT GUARDS?

PLEASE GET ON THE CHARIOT, YOUR HIGHNESS.



GIDDY-UP!



YES SIR. HE THREATENS TO ATTACK IF SIR DOESN'T HAND OVER THE EMPEROR.

IS GUO SI STILL MAKING A FUSS OUTSIDE?

MNNN! THIS DISH IS DELICIOUS!

JUST LEAVE HIM BE OUTSIDE FOR NOW.

LET THAT FOOL ATTACK MEIWO IF HE WISHES! DONG ZHUO BUILT THIS CASTLE WITH NO SPARED EXPENSE. IT SHAN'T BE EASY TO TAKE.

SIR! SIR! IT'S AN EMERGENCY!

B-BUT IT SEEMS THAT THE EMPEROR HAS ESCAPED THROUGH THE SECRET BACK EXIT!

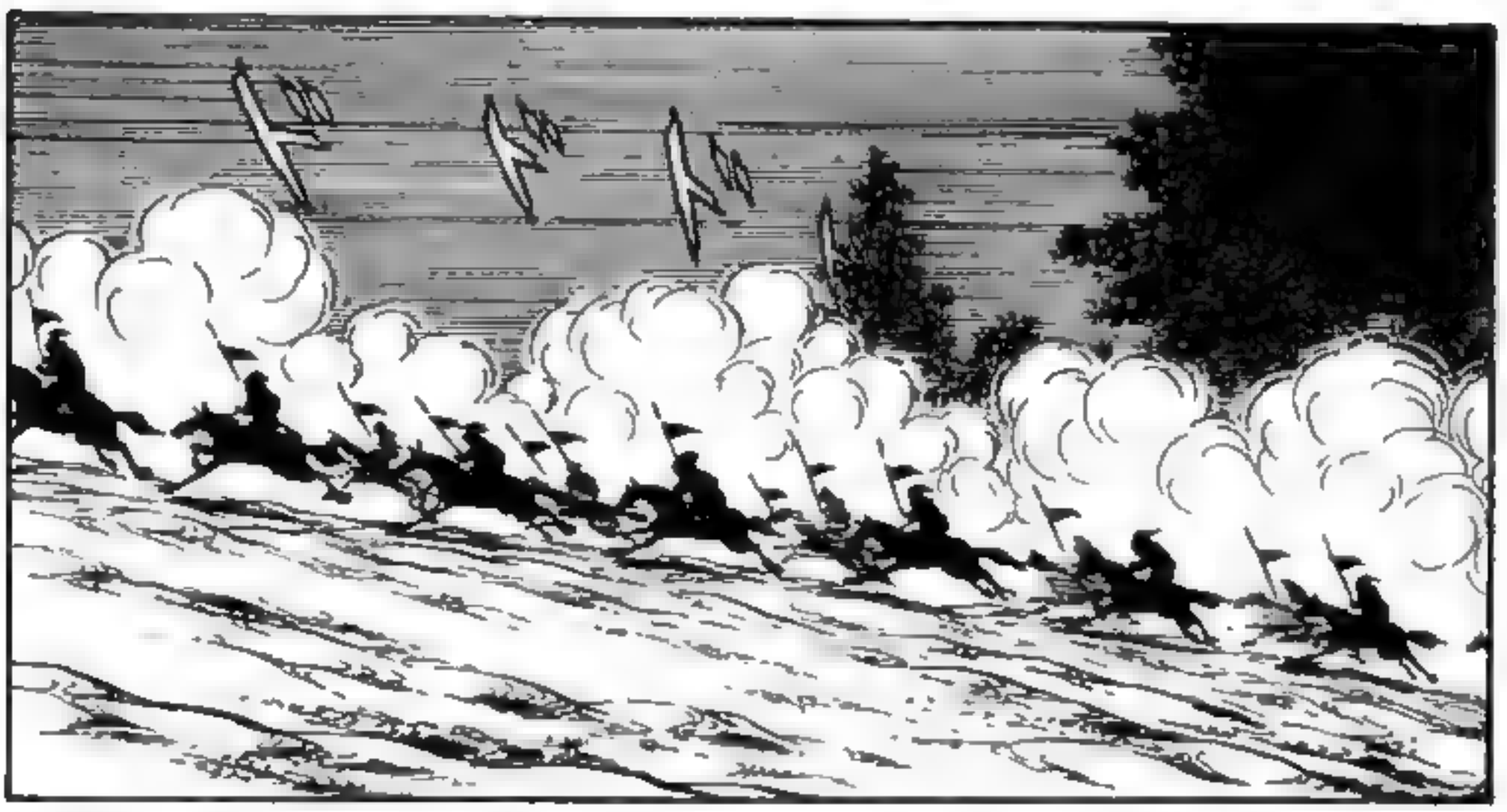
SHUT UP! I'M TRYING TO ENJOY MY DINNER HERE!

WHAT!?

GO BRING THE EMPEROR BACK AT ONCE!

J-JUST WHAT WERE THOSE IDIOTIC GUARDS DOING!?

IF THE EMPEROR FALLS IN *GUO SI'S* HANDS, IT'LL BE US WHO'LL BE THE REBELS!



THAT CAN'T BE, MEIWO IS A CASTLE WITH GREAT DEFENSES.

IS HE AFRAID OF OUR ARMY?

THAT'S LI JUE COMING OUT FROM MEIWO!

...!!!

?

THERE MUST BE SOME-THING MORE TO IT...

I'M GOING TO PRETEND TO BE ONE OF LI JUE'S SOLDIERS AND ASK WHAT'S GOING ON.

WHERE'RE YOU GOING?

ARE YOU STUPID? NOW ISN'T THE TIME TO WORRY ABOUT GUO SI.

HEY, SO WHY DID WE EXACTLY COME OUT FROM MEIWO SO SUDDENLY INSTEAD OF DEALING WITH GUO SI'S ARMY?

THE EMPEROR RAN AWAY SO WE'LL BECOME REBELS IF WE DON'T CATCH HIM SOON!

I MUST REPORT THIS AT ONCE!

I KNEW SOMETHING WAS UP!

URGENT REPORT FOR COMMANDER GUO SI!

WHAT!!?

THE EMPEROR HAS FLED FROM MEIWO! LI JUE AND HIS ARMY ARE CURRENTLY IN PURSUIT TO RETRIEVE THE EMPEROR!

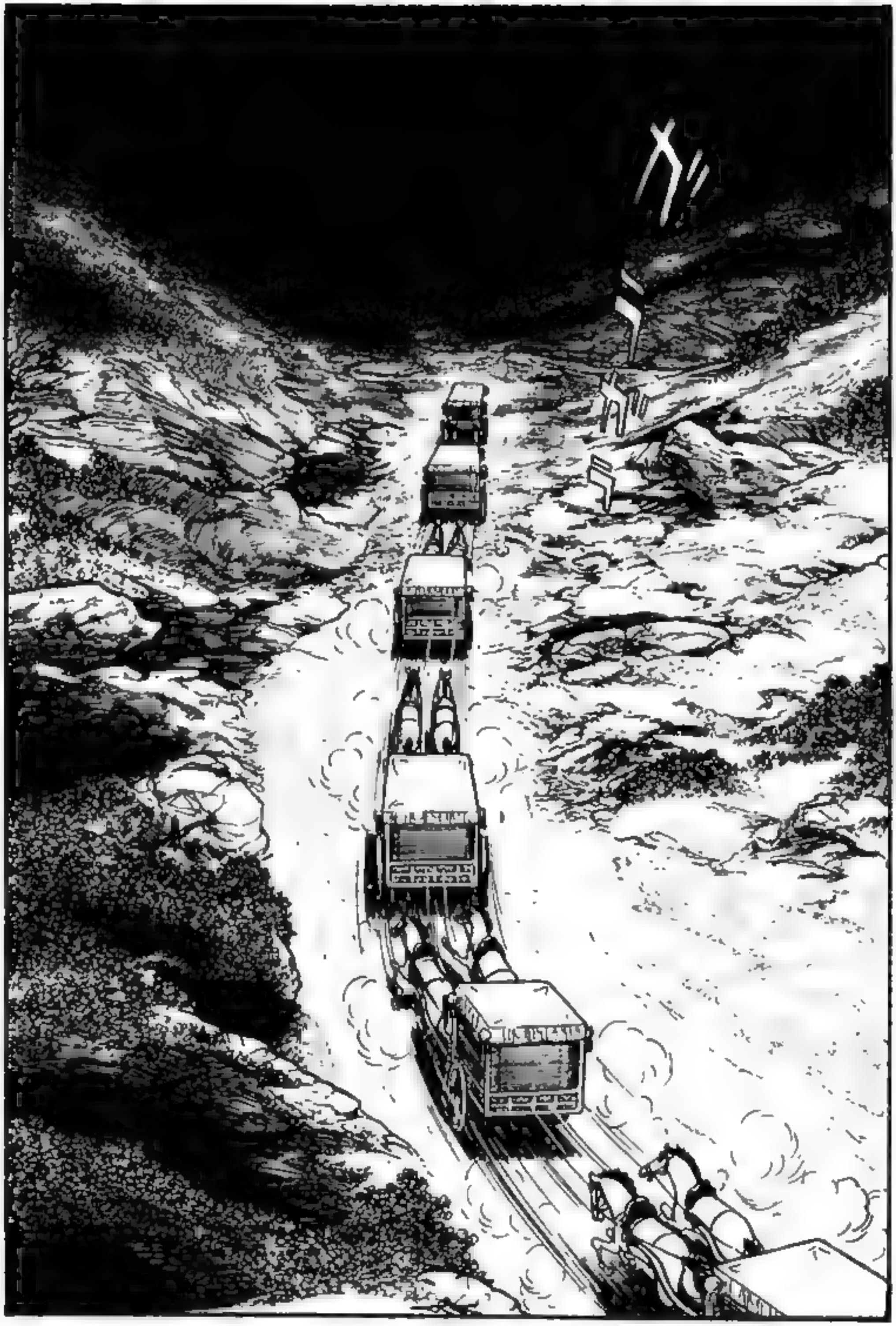
WHAT IS IT?

YES, SIR!

A-ARE YOU SURE!?

I CANNOT ALLOW LI JUE TO GET TO THE EMPEROR FIRST!

THE EMPEROR HAS FLED FROM MEIWO! WE MUST RETRIEVE THE EMPEROR AT ANY COSTS!

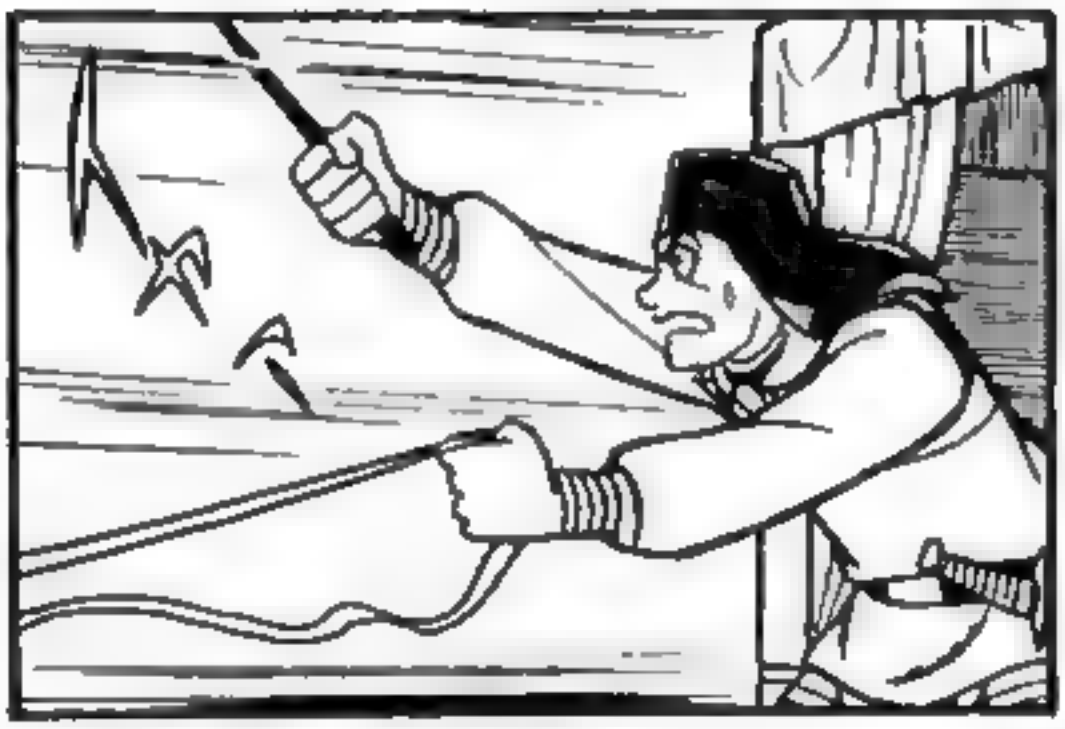


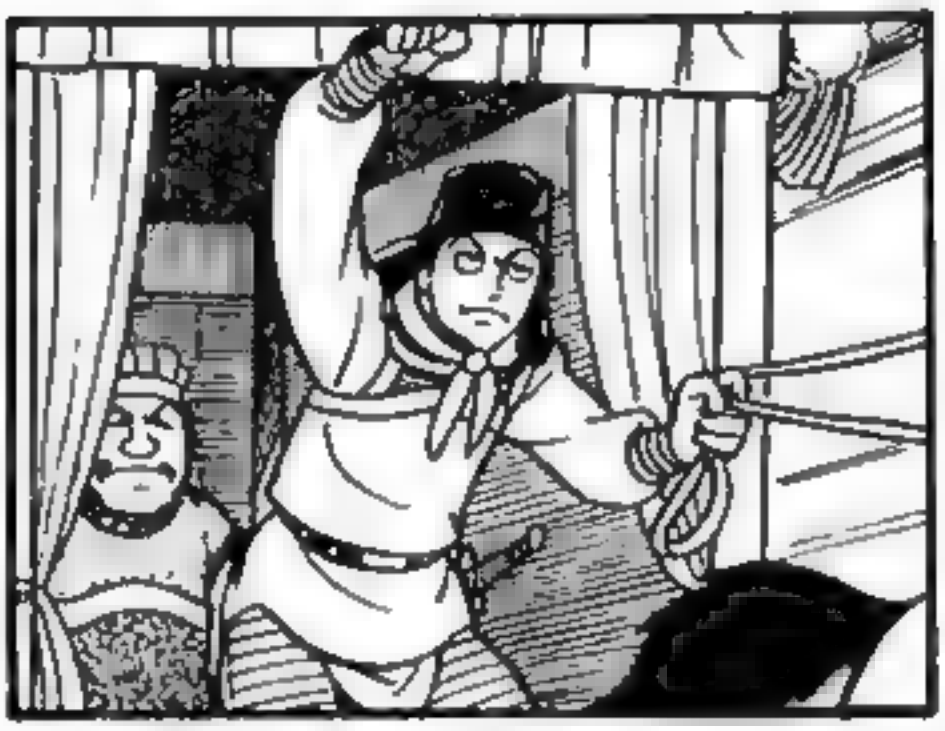
AHH!

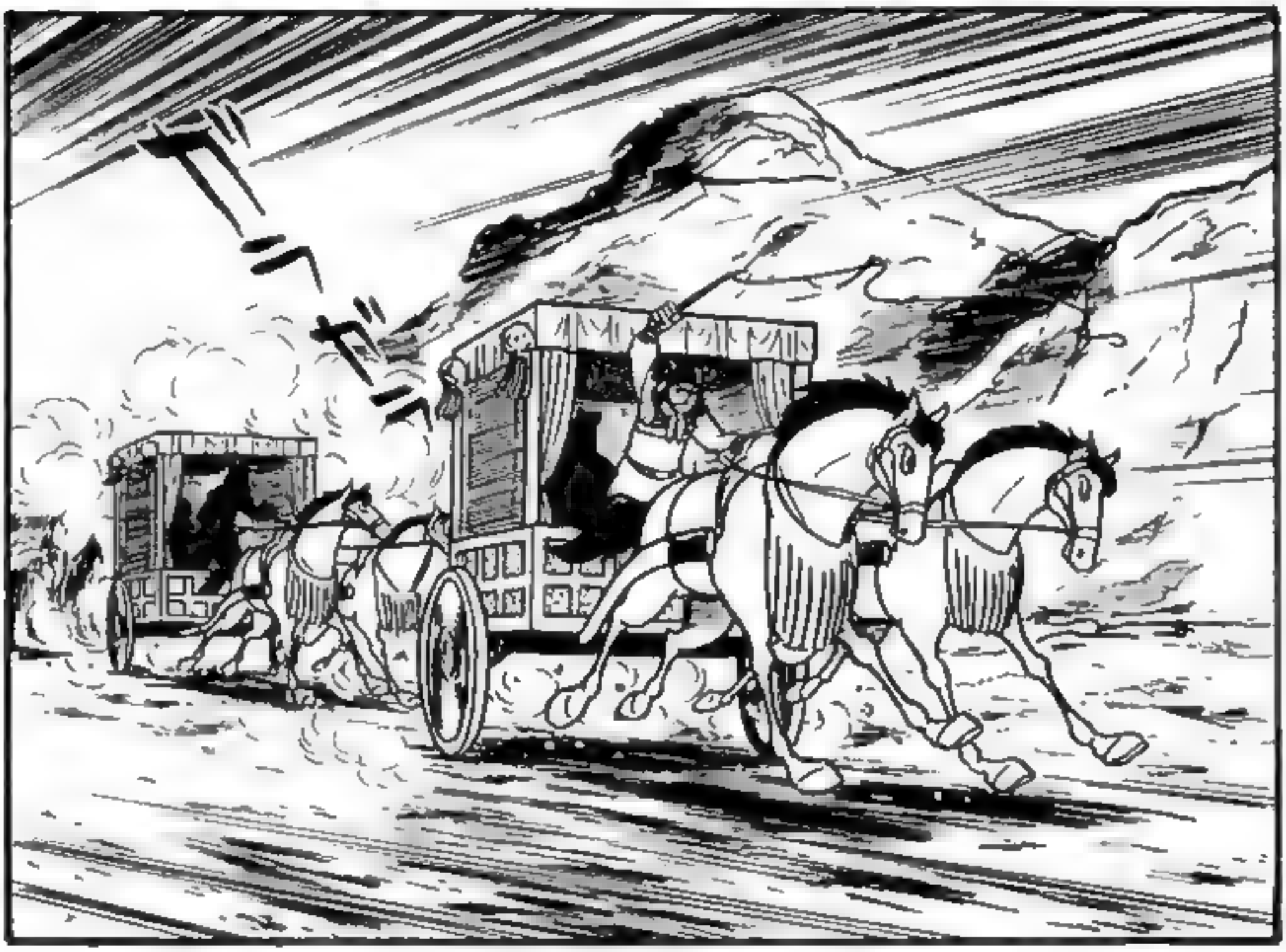
HMM?

FASTER! WE MUST ESCAPE AT ALL COSTS!

LI JUE'S ARMY IS RIGHT BEHIND US!





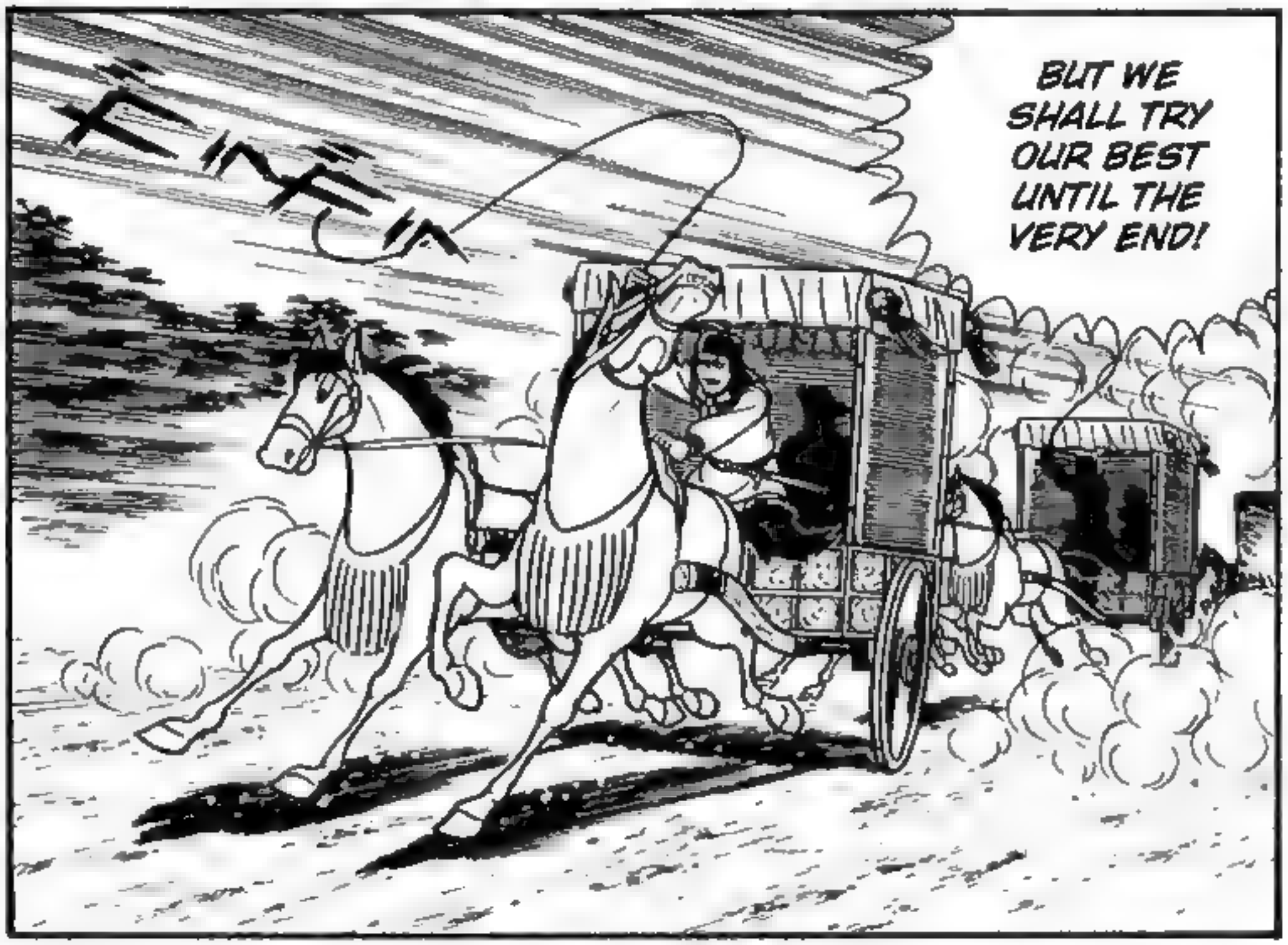


I AM SURE THEY WILL NOT LAY A HAND ON YOUR HIGHNESS BUT I CANNOT SAY THE SAME FOR US AND THE OTHER RETAINERS.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN IF LI JUE CATCHES US?

NO, I DO NOT, YOUR HIGHNESS CHARIOTS ARE NATURALLY BOUND TO BE SLOWER THAN THE CAVALRY.

DO YOU HAVE CONFIDENCE WE CAN ESCAPE!?

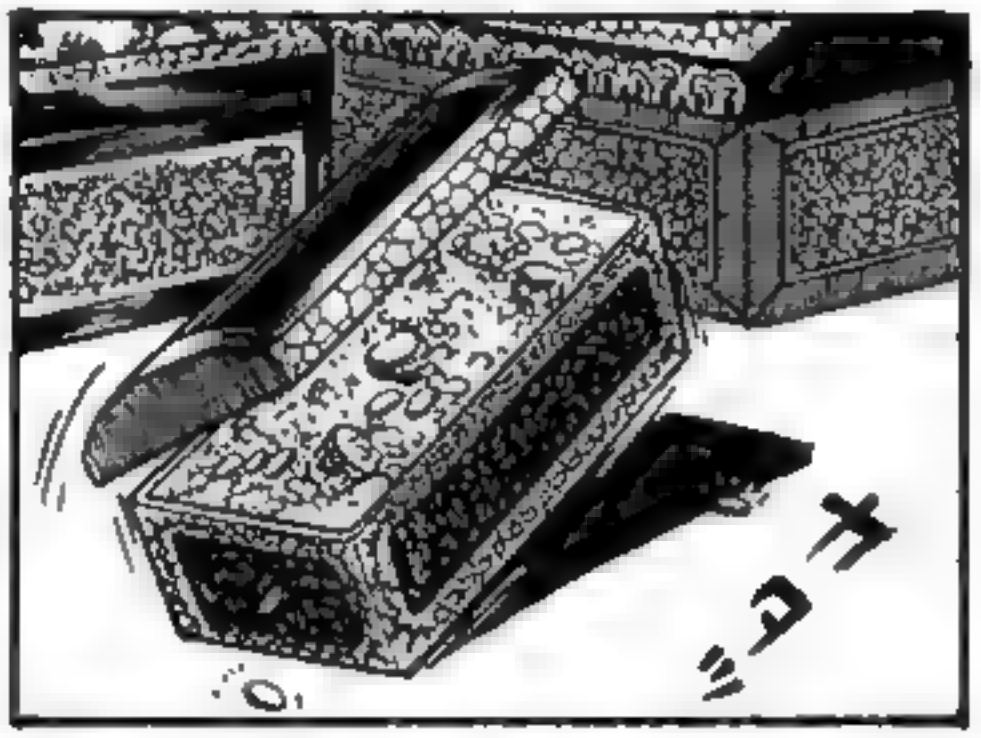

BUT WE SHALL TRY OUR BEST UNTIL THE VERY END!

JUST A LITTLE MORE AND WE'LL CATCH UP TO THEM!

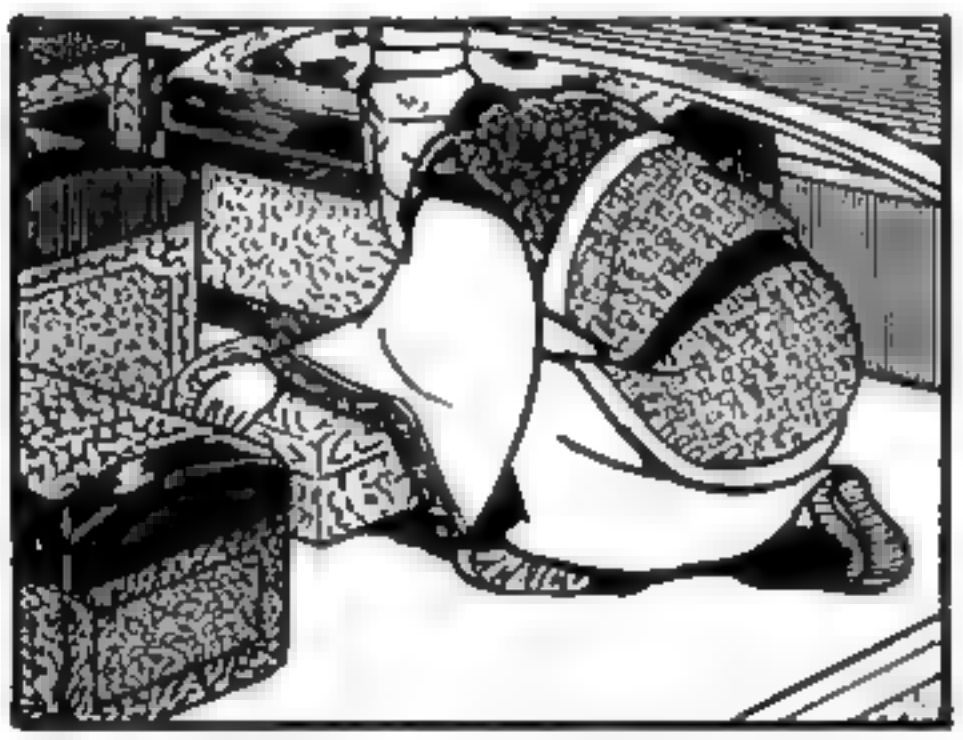
!?

THEY'RE CLOSING IN ON US!

I HAVE A PLAN TO SLOW THEM DOWN.

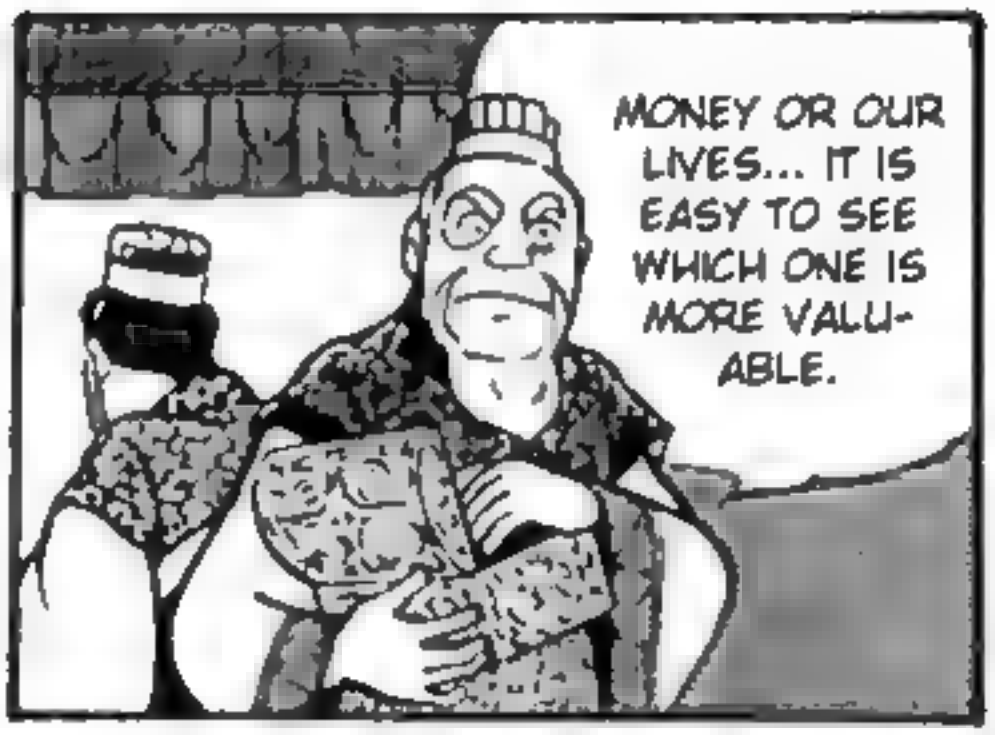


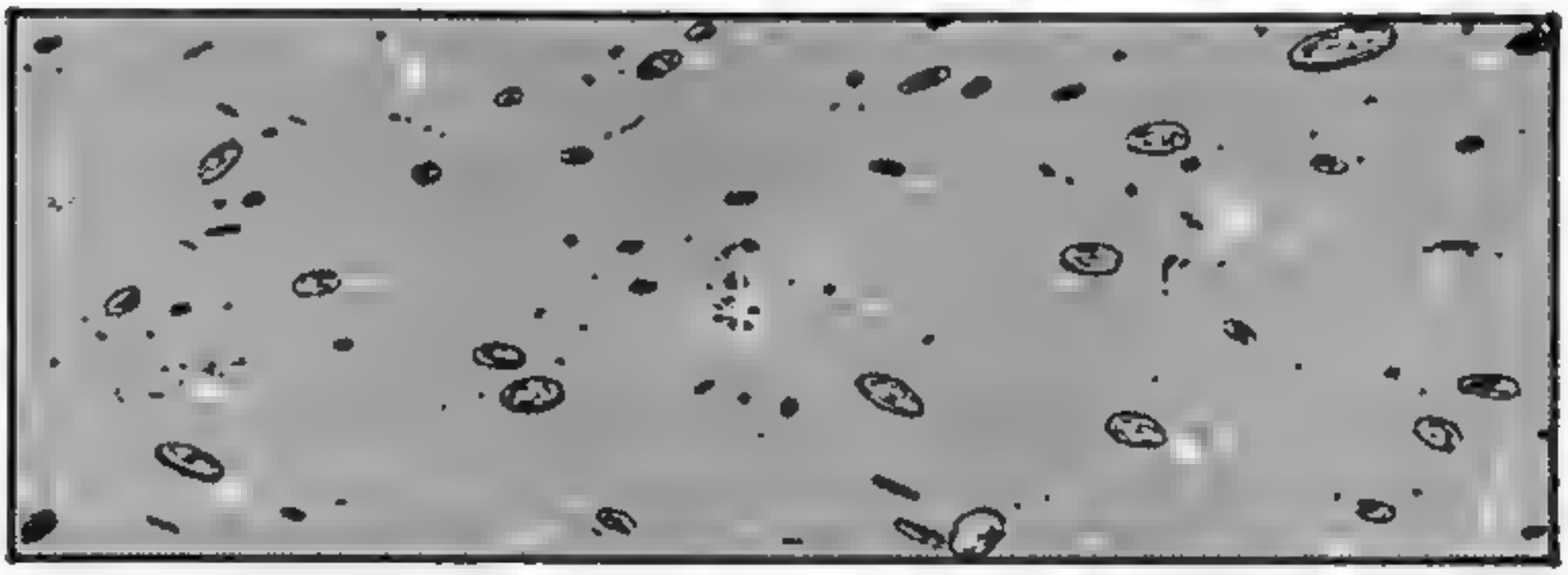
DONG CHENG, WHAT ARE YOU DOING!?

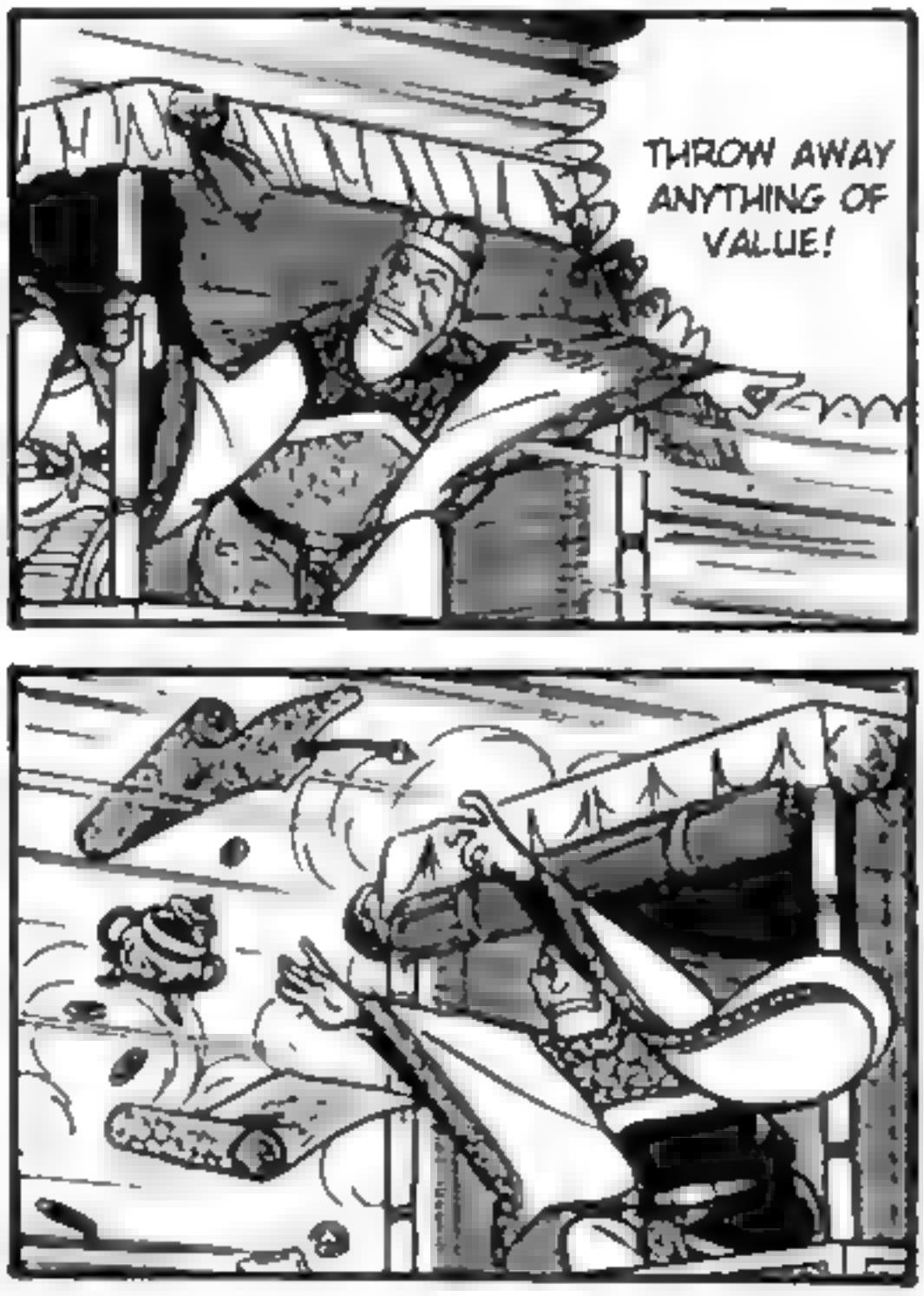


THEY'RE THE TYPE TO BE EASILY SWAYED BY TREASURES.
ONLY LI JUE AND THE CAPTAINS LIVE LUXURIOUS LIVES. THE REMAINING SOLDIERS ARE POOR SOLDIERS JUST TRYING TO MAKE A LIVING.

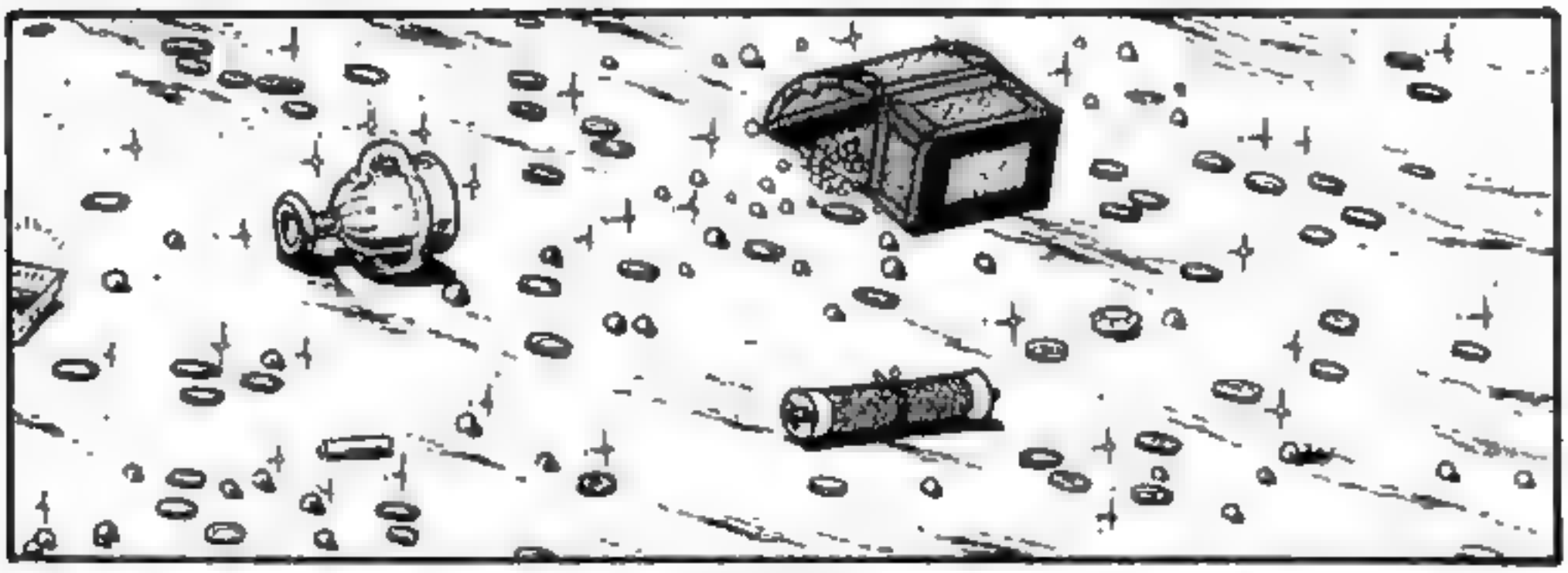
HAHH!


MONEY OR OUR LIVES... IT IS EASY TO SEE WHICH ONE IS MORE VALU-ABLE.



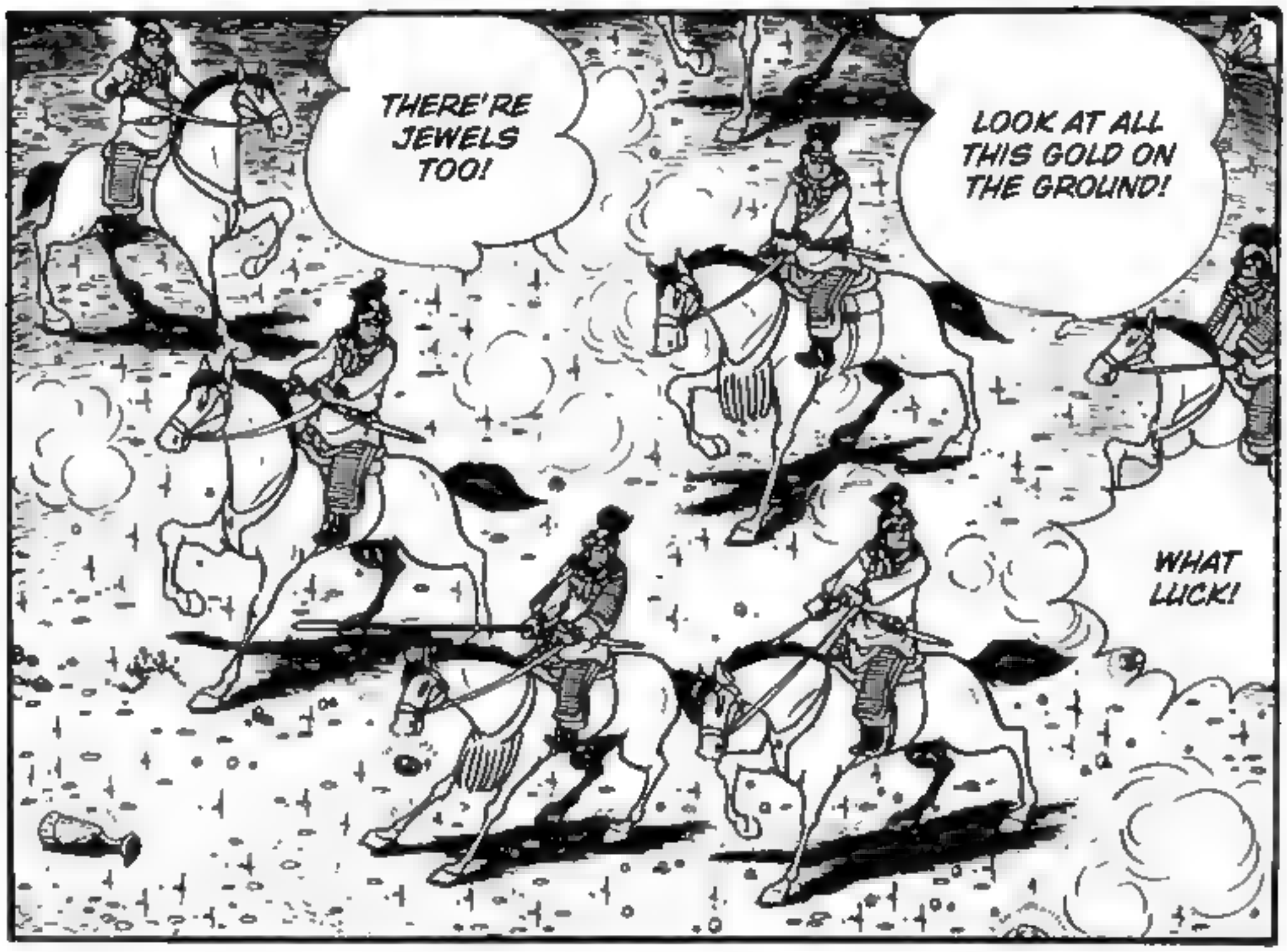

THROW AWAY ANYTHING OF VALUE!

TAKE THAT!



IT'S GOLD!

HUH?


THERE'RE JEWELS TOO!
LOOK AT ALL THIS GOLD ON THE GROUND!
WHAT LUCK!

わあ

わあ

わあ！

NO, I DID!

I PICKED IT UP FIRST!

HE'S RIGHT!

THERE'S NOTHING TO FIGHT ABOUT, THERE'S A LOT MORE WHERE THAT CAME FROM!

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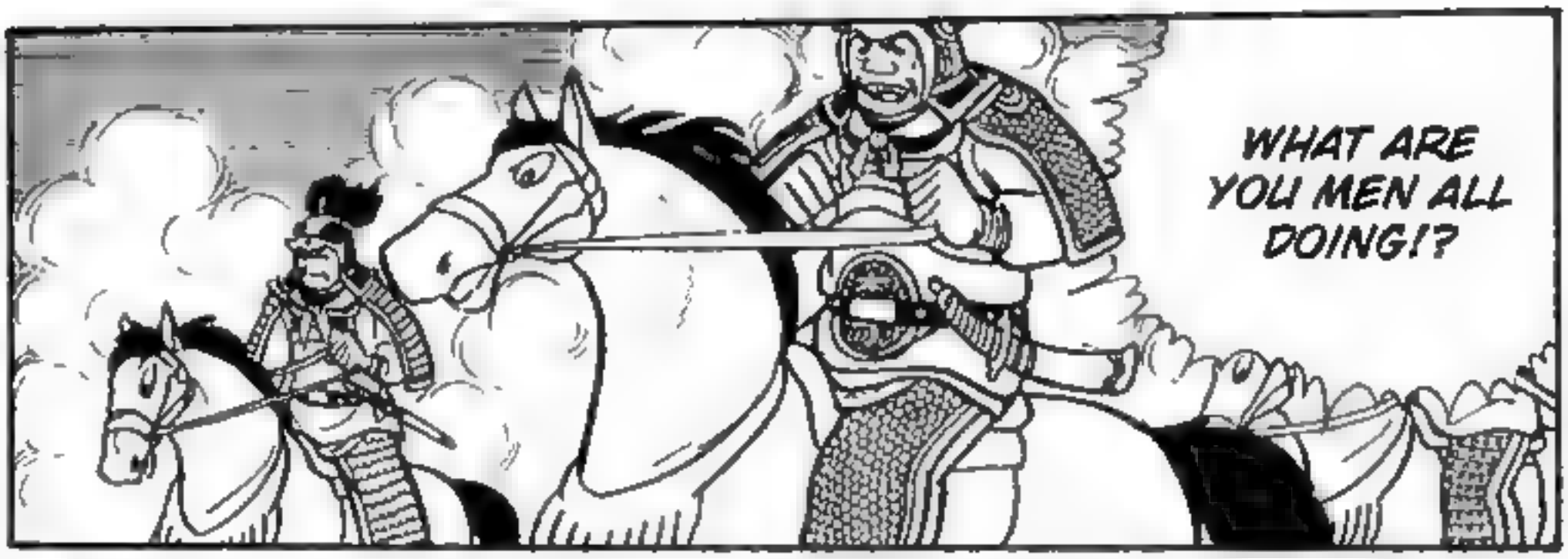
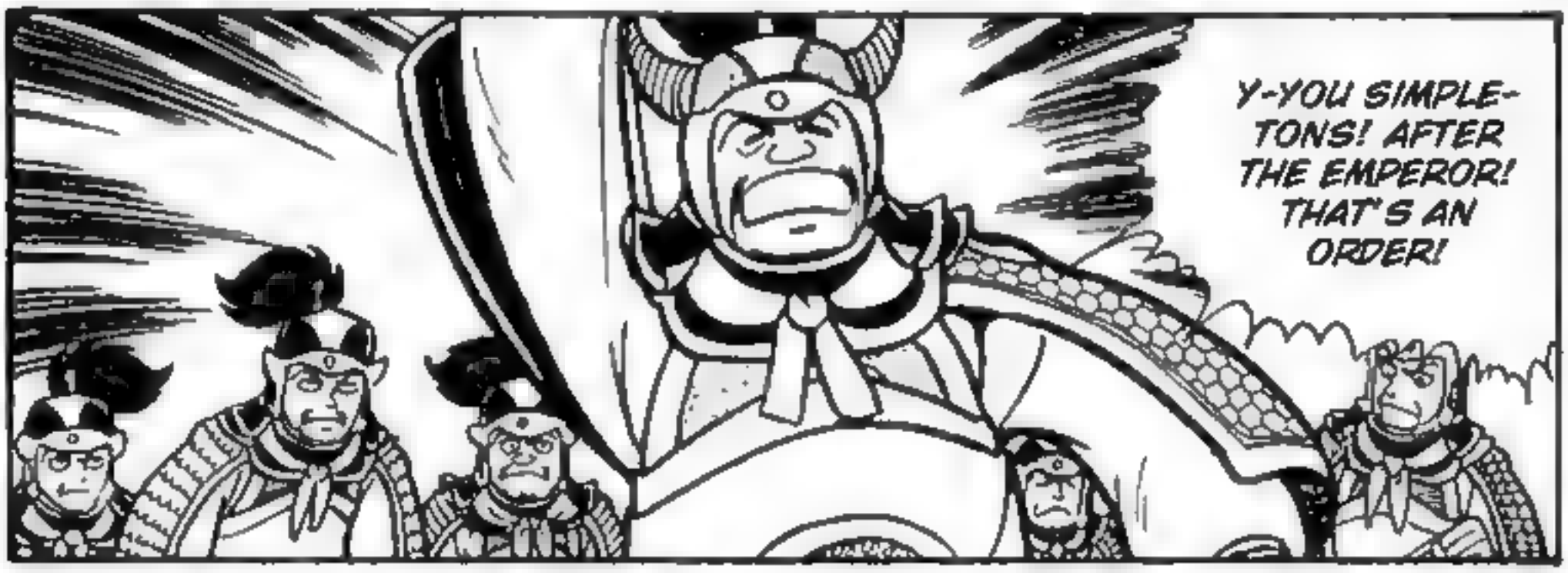
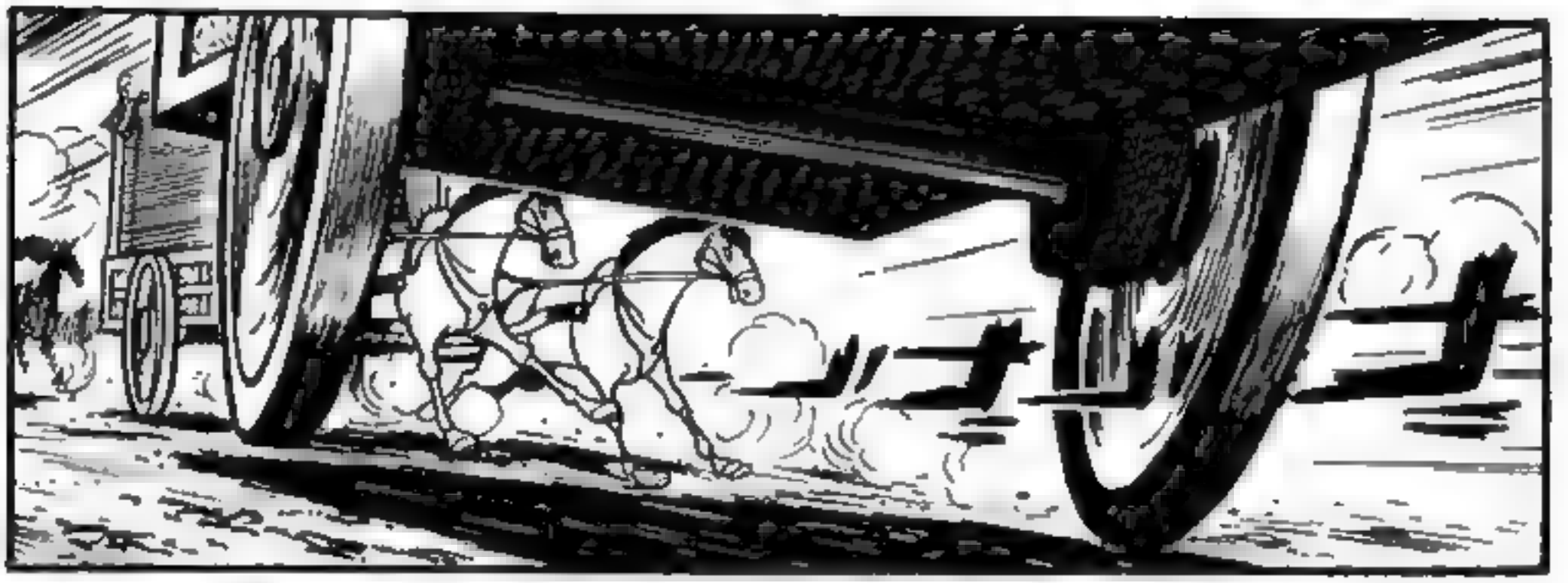

WHAT ARE YOU MEN ALL DOING!?

I'M GOING TO QUIT THE ARMY AND LIVE PEACE-FULLY WITH THESE!

THERE'S ENOUGH TREASURE SCATTERED ABOUT HERE TO GIVE US ALL SEVERAL YEAR'S WORTH OF PAY!

YEAH, YOU SAID IT! WHO WOULD WANT TO LIVE AS A SOLDIER AND WONDER IF YOU'LL EVEN LIVE TO SEE THE NEXT DAY!

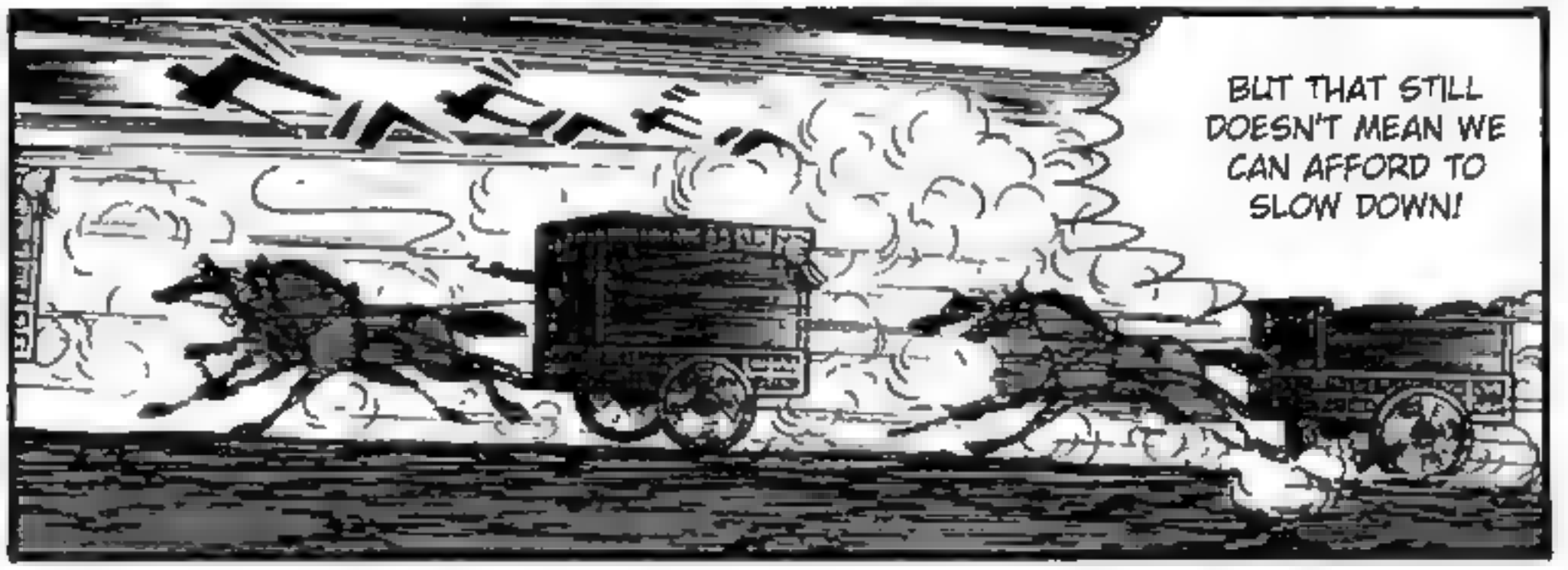

Y-YOU SIMPLE-TONS! AFTER THE EMPEROR! THAT'S AN ORDER!



WHAT A PITIFUL SIGHT.

DONG CHENG, YOUR PLAN SEEMS TO HAVE WORKED!

BUT THANKS TO THEM, WE'RE SAVED.

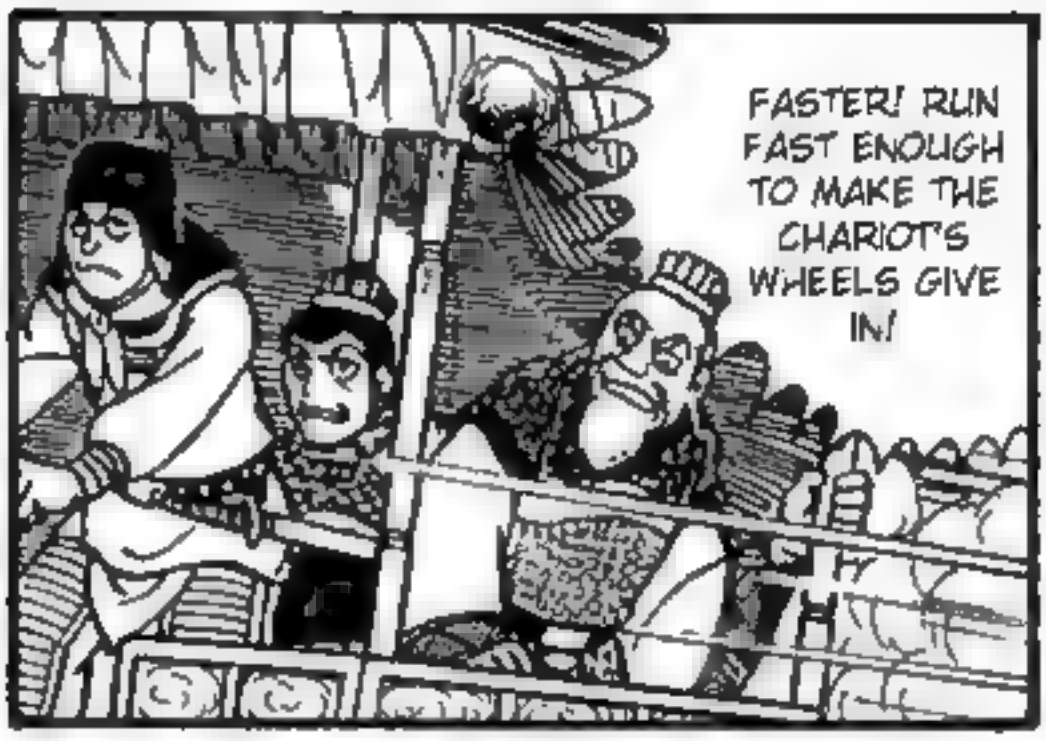

BUT THAT STILL DOESN'T MEAN WE CAN AFFORD TO SLOW DOWN!

WHAT!?
DONG CHENG, THERE ARE SOLDIERS HERE AS WELL!

AHH!

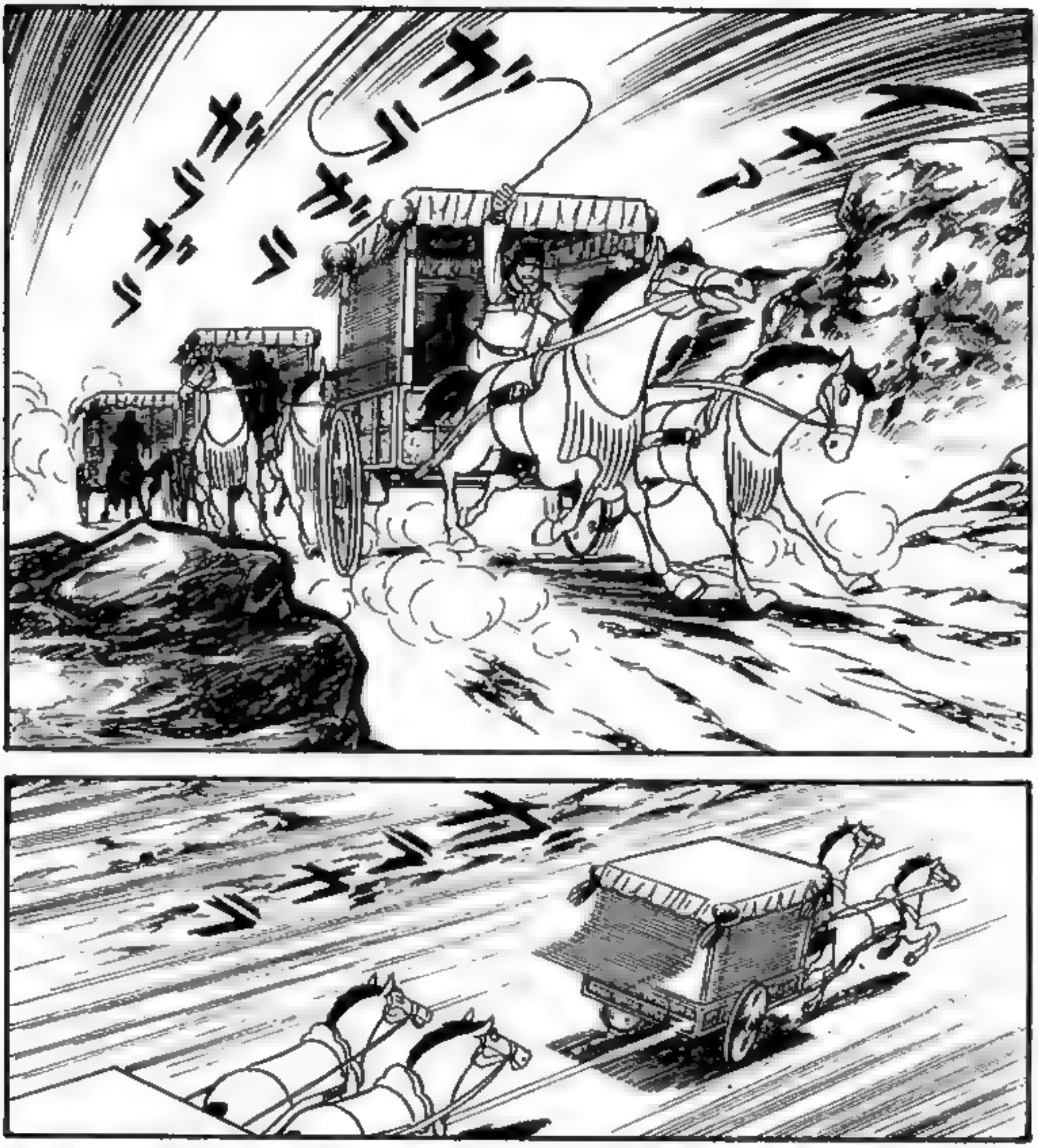
GUO SI'S ARMY WAS PURSUING US AS WELL...!

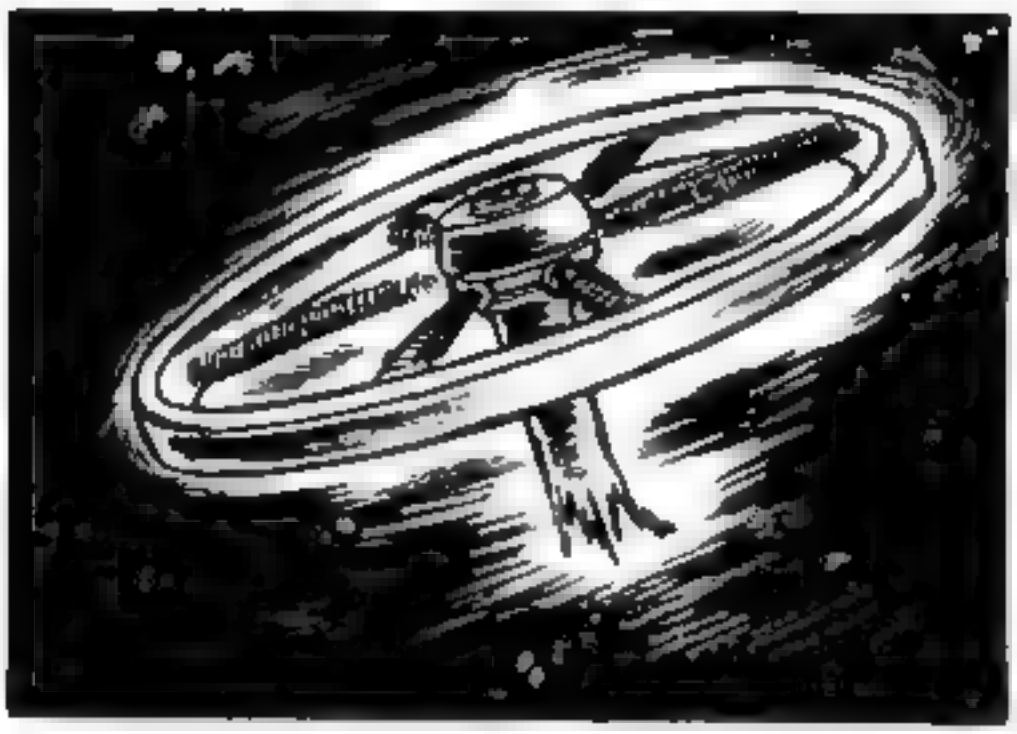
THAT'S GUO SI'S FLAG!

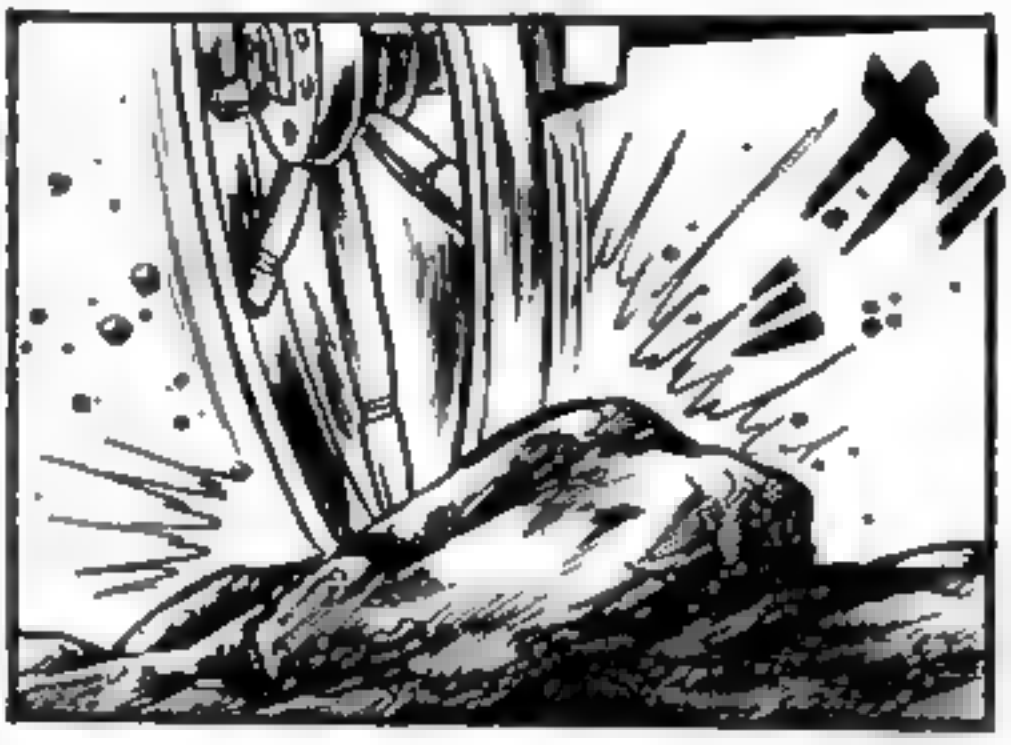

FASTER! RUN FAST ENOUGH TO MAKE THE CHARIOT'S WHEELS GIVE IN!

THERE AREN'T ANYMORE TREASURES TO THROW OUT!

DON'T LET THE EMPEROR ESCAPE!







YOUR HIGH-NESS!

IS YOUR HIGHNESS INJURED!?

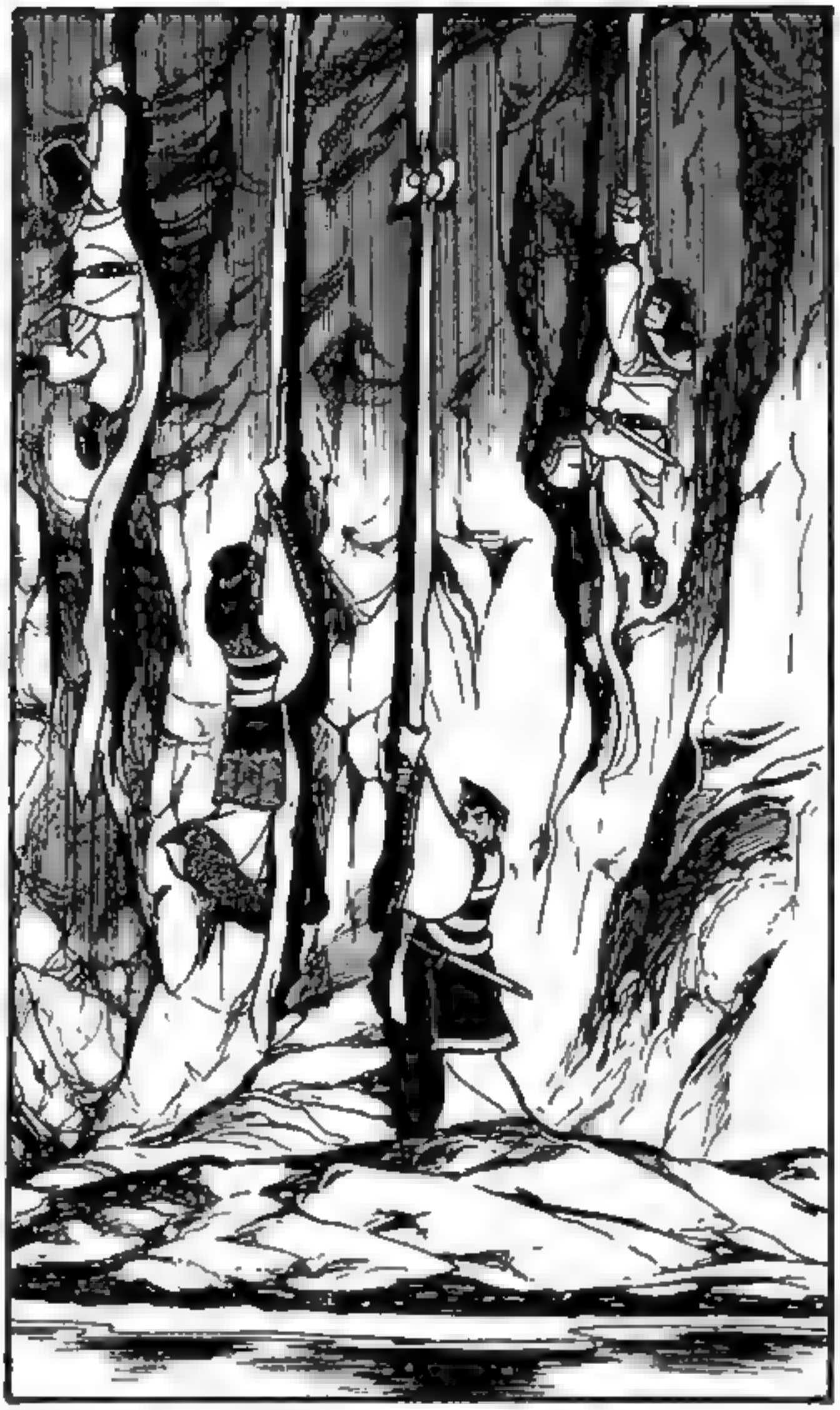
NO, YOUR HIGHNESS!

YOUR HIGHNESS MUSTN'T LET HIMSELF CONTINUE TO BE USED BY THOSE SCUM FOR THE GOOD OF THIS NATION. WE MUST NOT GIVE UP!

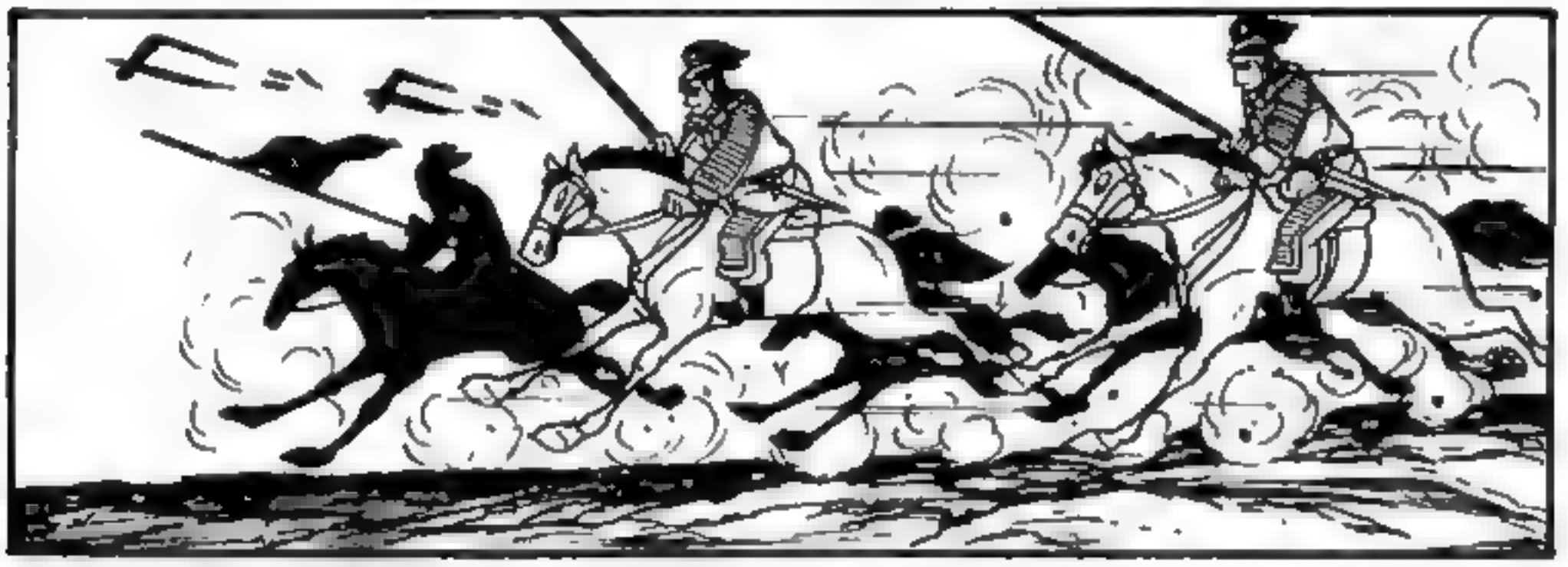
I...I'M FINE. BUT I'M AFRAID IT IS THE END OF LINE FOR US. GUO SI WILL SURELY CATCH US IN NO TIME...!

AFTER THAT, ALL WE NEED TO DO IS CROSS THE RIVER ON A BOAT AND WE SHALL BE SAFE AT LAST!

THEIR HORSES CAN'T FOLLOW US IF WE MANAGE TO SCALE DOWN THESE CLIFFS.



QUICKLY, YOUR HIGHNESS!



YOU MUST BE THE ONES WHO LET THE EMPEROR ESCAPE!

KILL THEM ALL!

HOW DARE YOU...!

IS THERE NO ONE LEFT WHO TRULY CARES FOR THE GOOD OF THIS NATION ANYMORE...!?

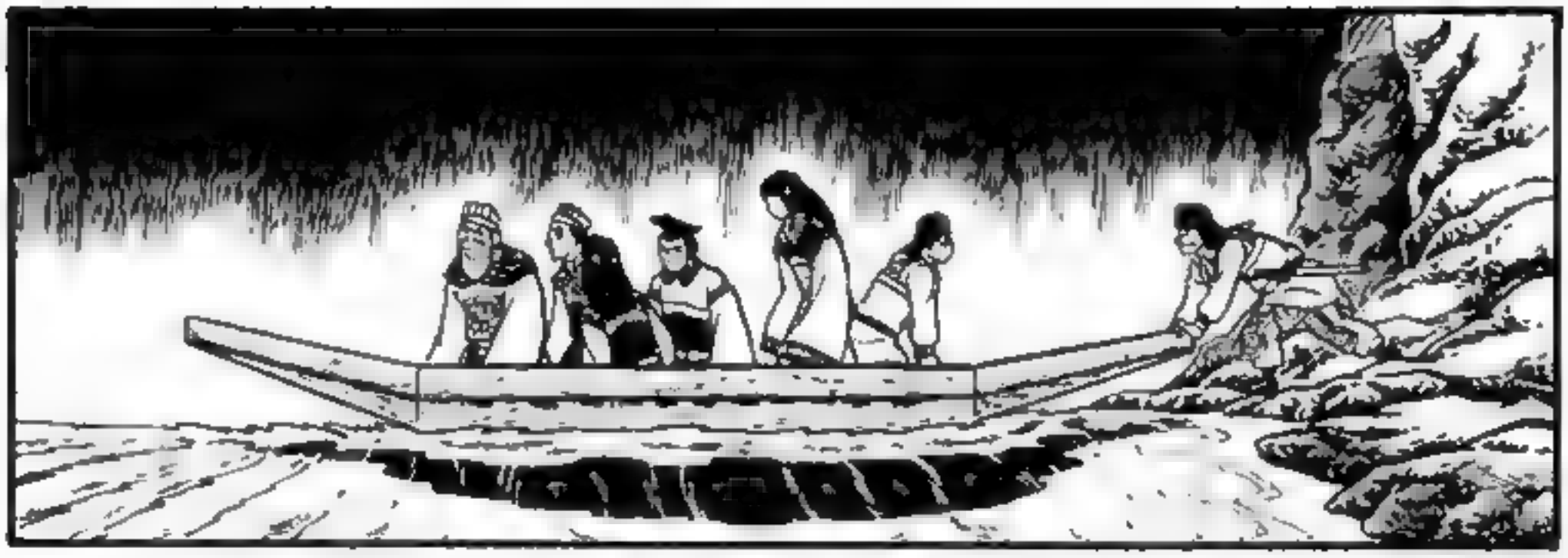
THERE IS NO TIME TO WASTE, YOUR HIGHNESS!

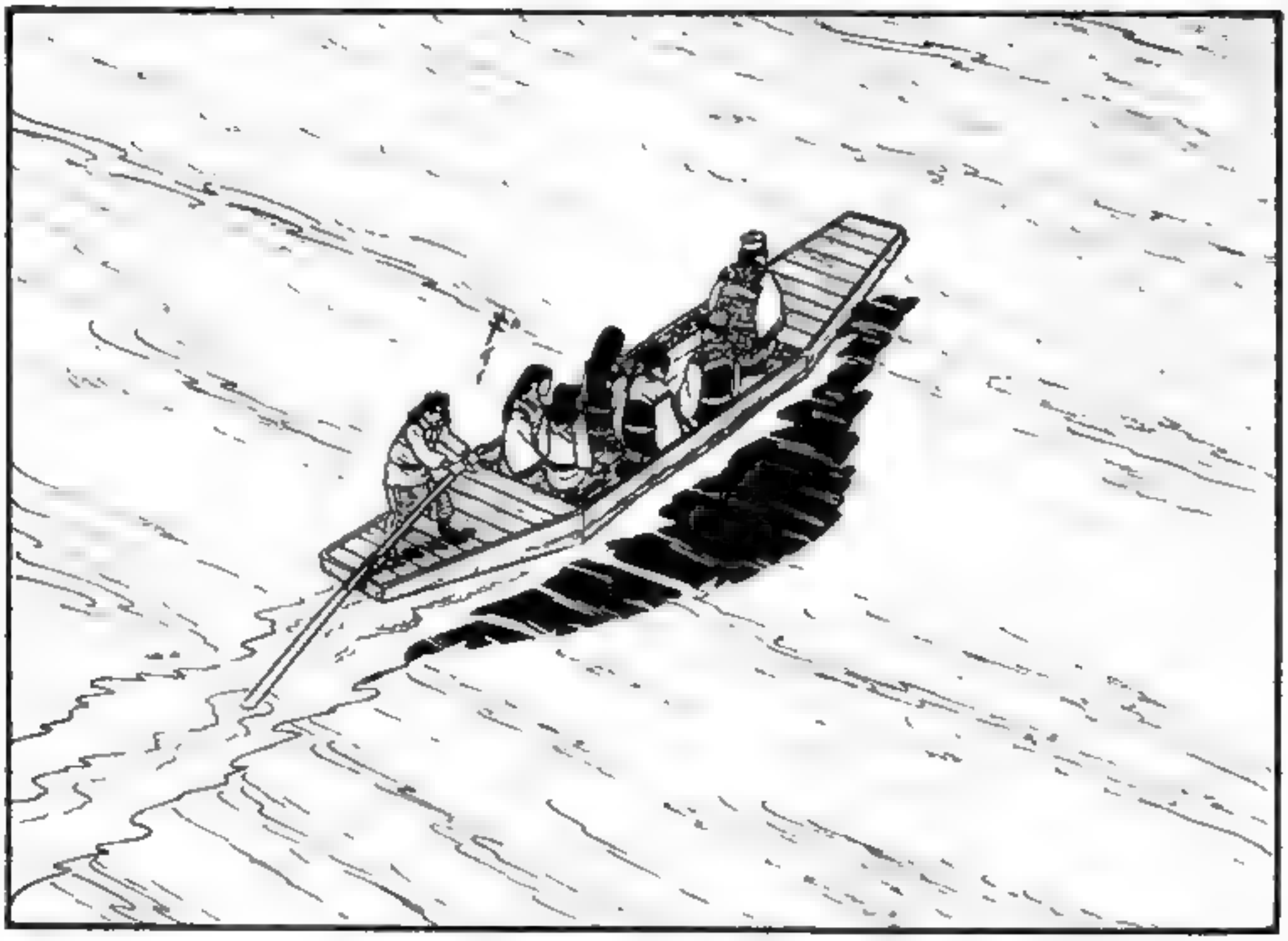
YES...

WE WILL BE SAFE AT LAST, YOUR HIGHNESS.

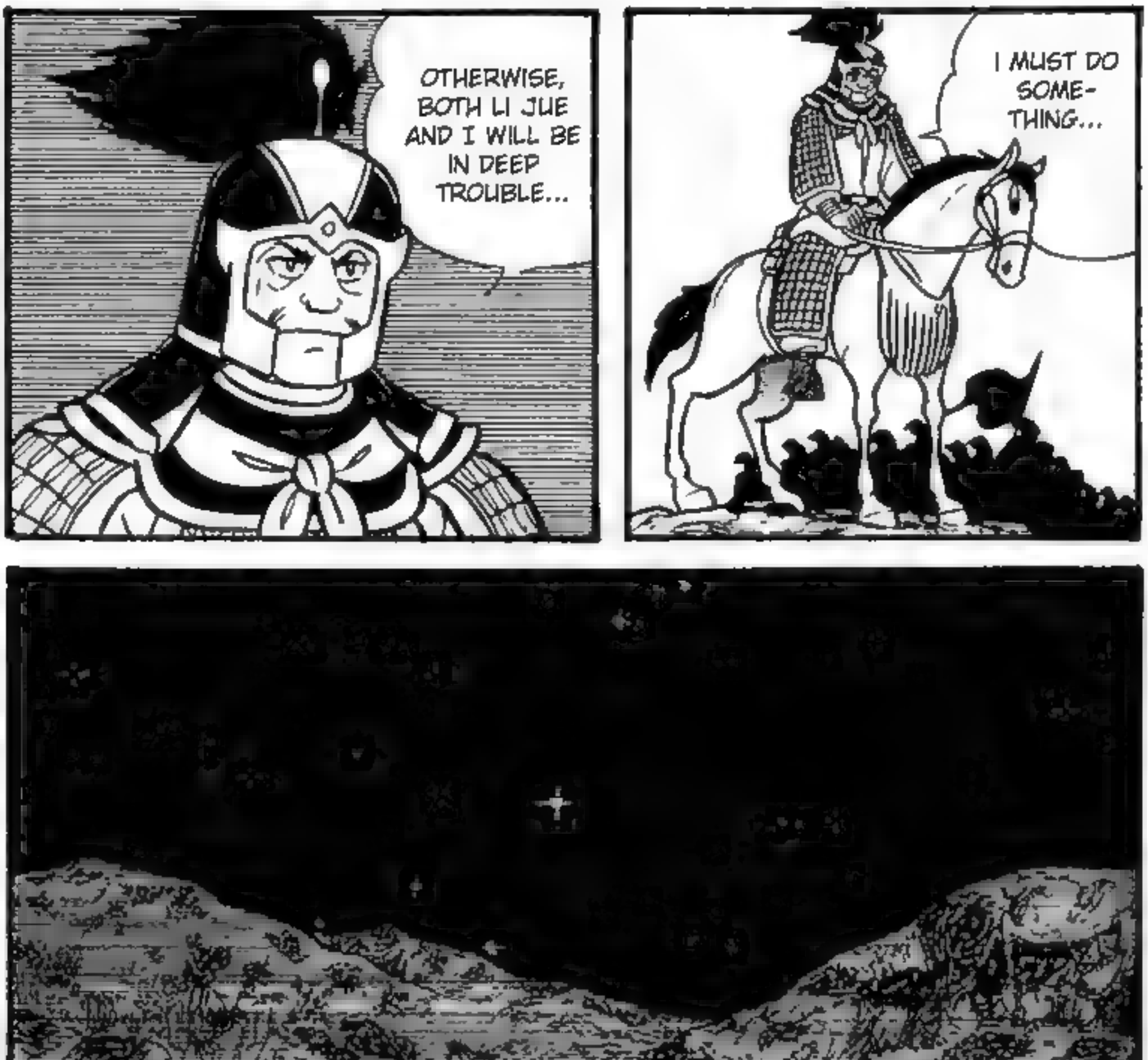
LOOK, IT'S A BOAT!

PLEASE GET ON, YOUR HIGHNESS.





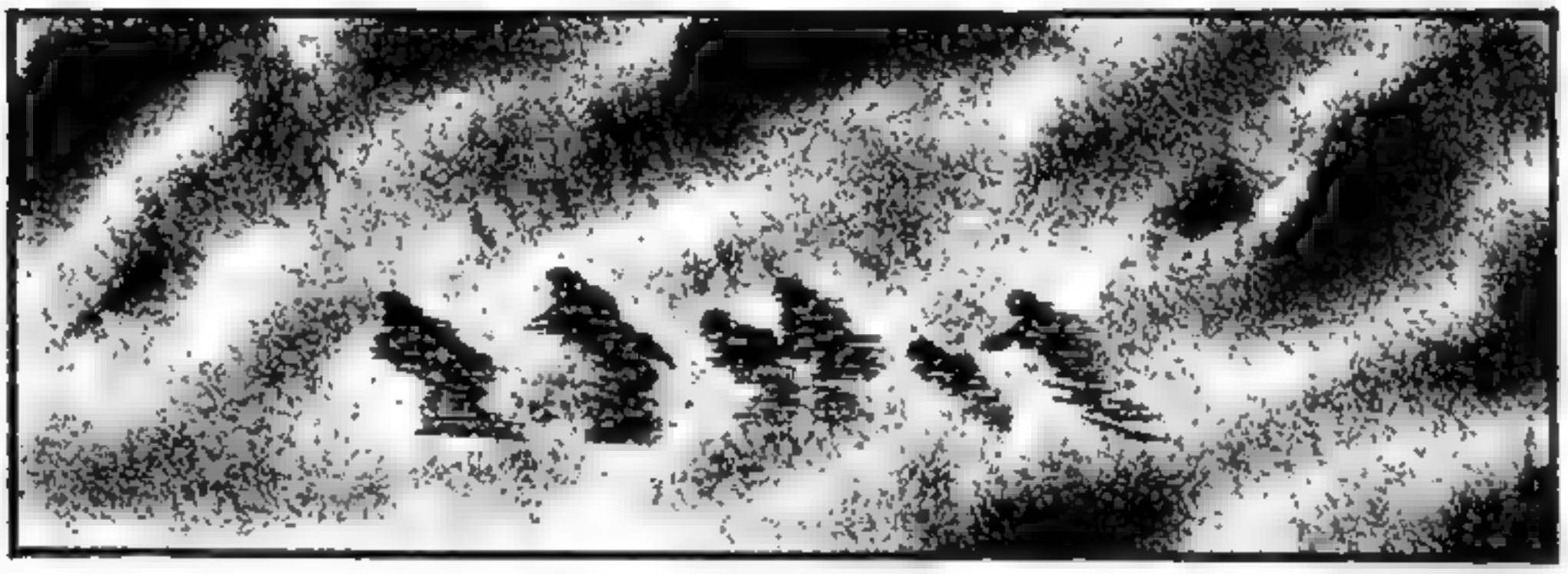
CURSES!
THE EMPEROR IS CROSSING THE RIVER!

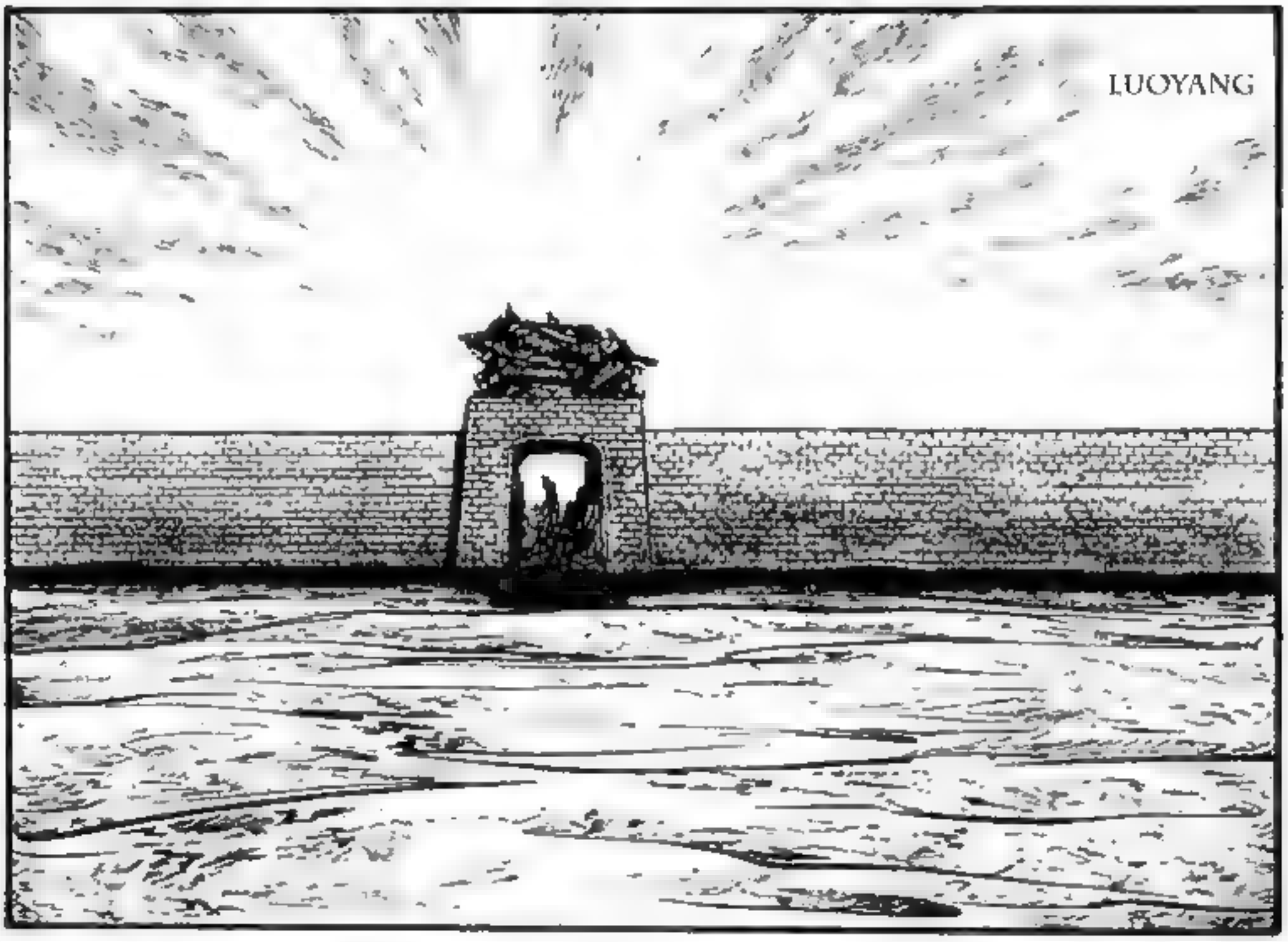

OTHERWISE, BOTH LI JUE AND I WILL BE IN DEEP TROUBLE...
I MUST DO SOME-THING...

RUINS OF LUOYANG

IT IS WHERE THE HISTORY OF HAN LIES.
DONG ZHUO MAY HAVE MOVED THE CAPITAL TO CHANG'AN BUT LUOYANG WILL FOREVER BE MY TRUE HOME.

UNDERSTOOD, YOUR HIGHNESS. LET US HEAD TO LUOYANG THEN.

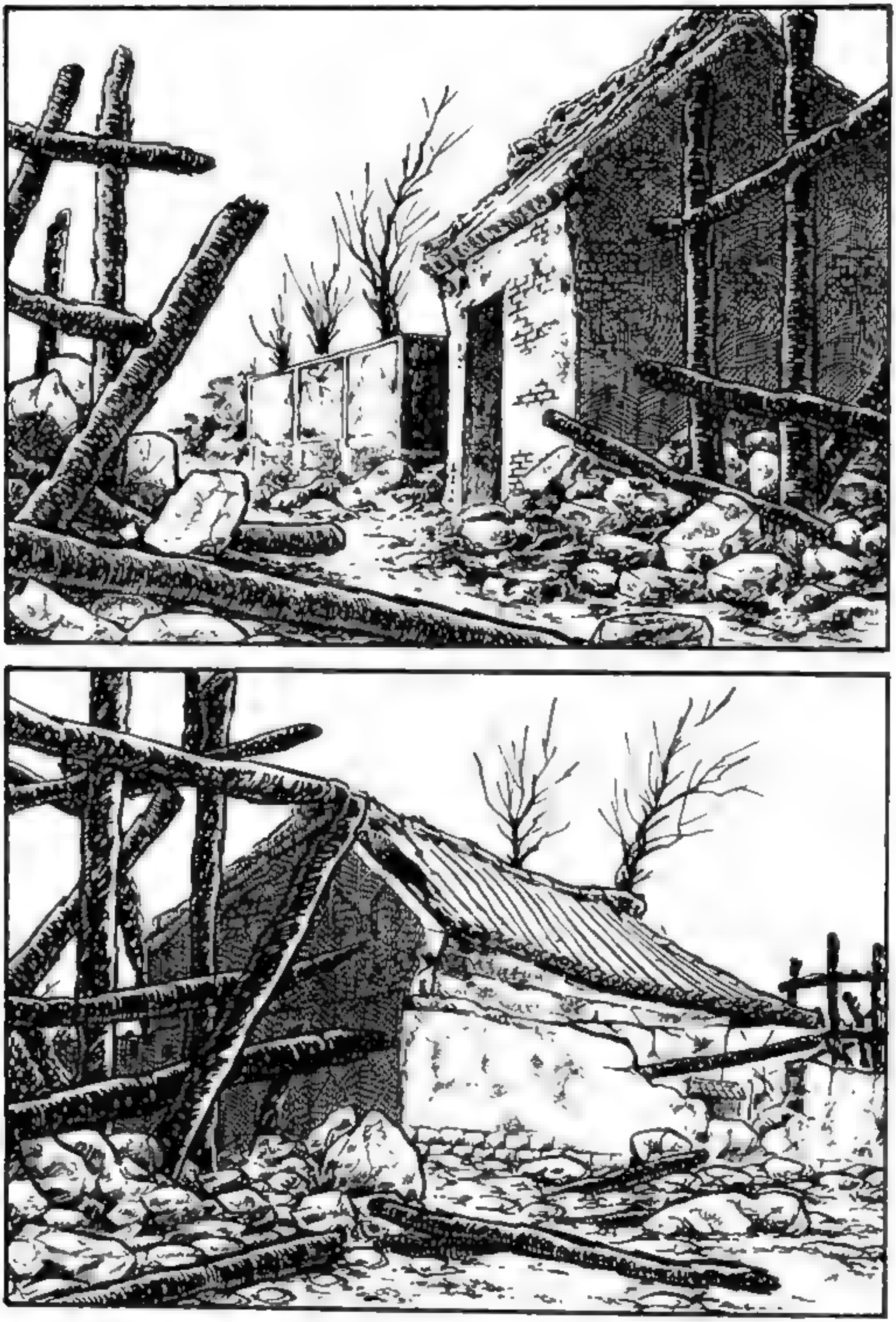



LUOYANG

YES.
WE'VE ARRIVED AT LUOYANG AT LAST, YOUR HIGHNESS.

MY DEAR HOME.

AH!



THIS IS WHAT REMAINS OF ITS FORMER SPLENDOR ...?

T-THIS IS LUOYANG?

DONG ZHUO APPARENTLY BURNT LUOYANG DURING THE MOVE TO CHANG'AN TO PREVENT LEAVING ANYTHING VALUABLE TO THE ALLIANCE.

IT HAS BECOME A WASTE-LAND..

BUT I HAD NEVER IMAGINED IT WOULD BE REDUCED TO THIS...

I HAVE NO INTENTION OF MOVING SOMEWHERE ELSE.

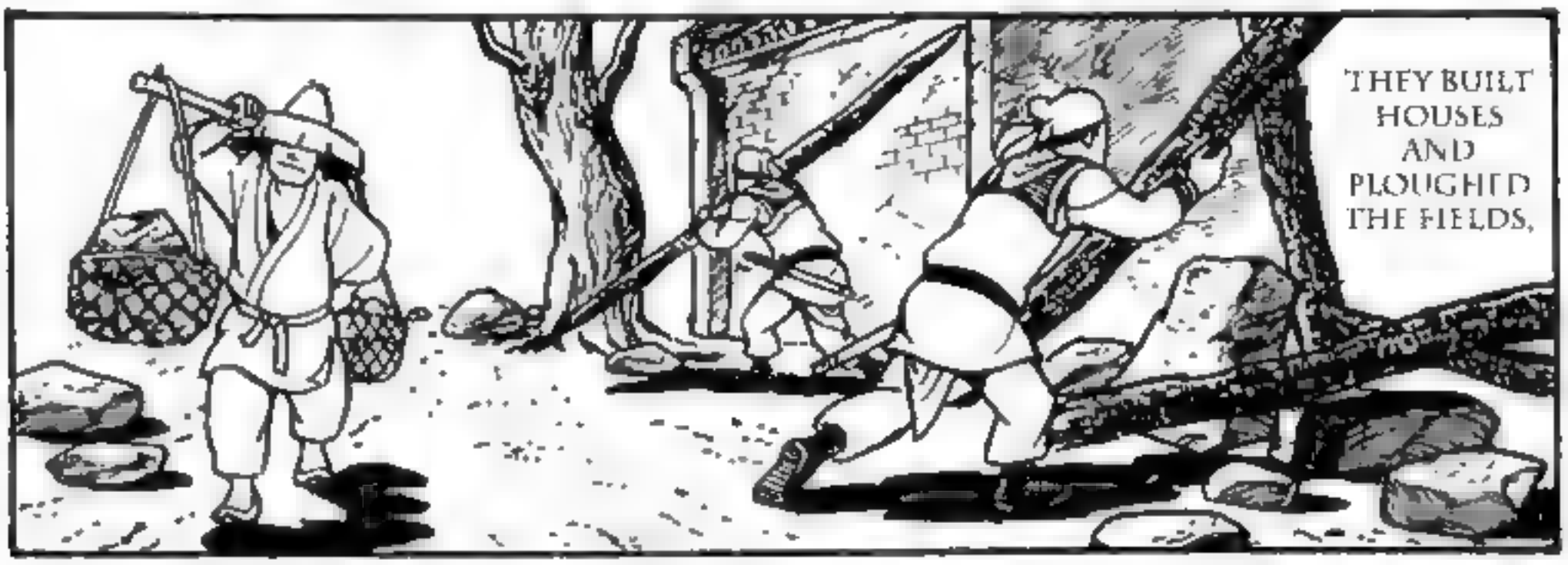
NO...

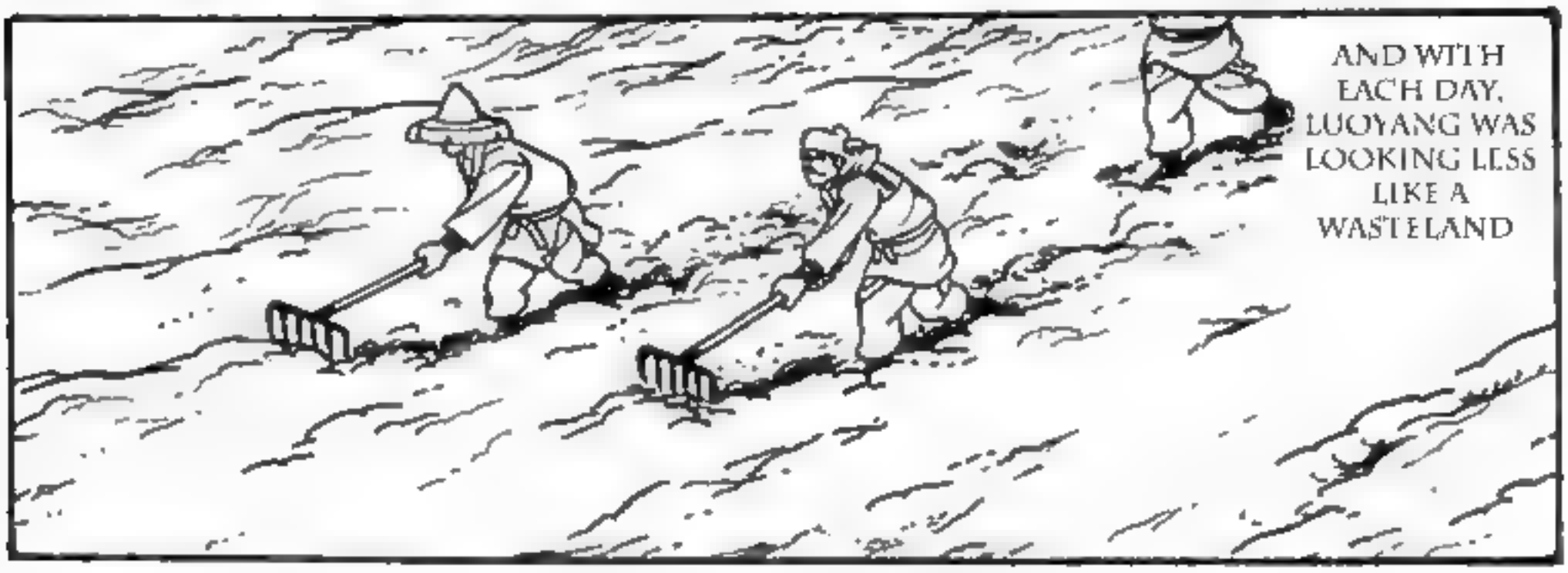
WHAT DOES YOUR HIGHNESS WISH TO DO NOW? SHALL WE HEAD SOMEWHERE ELSE...?

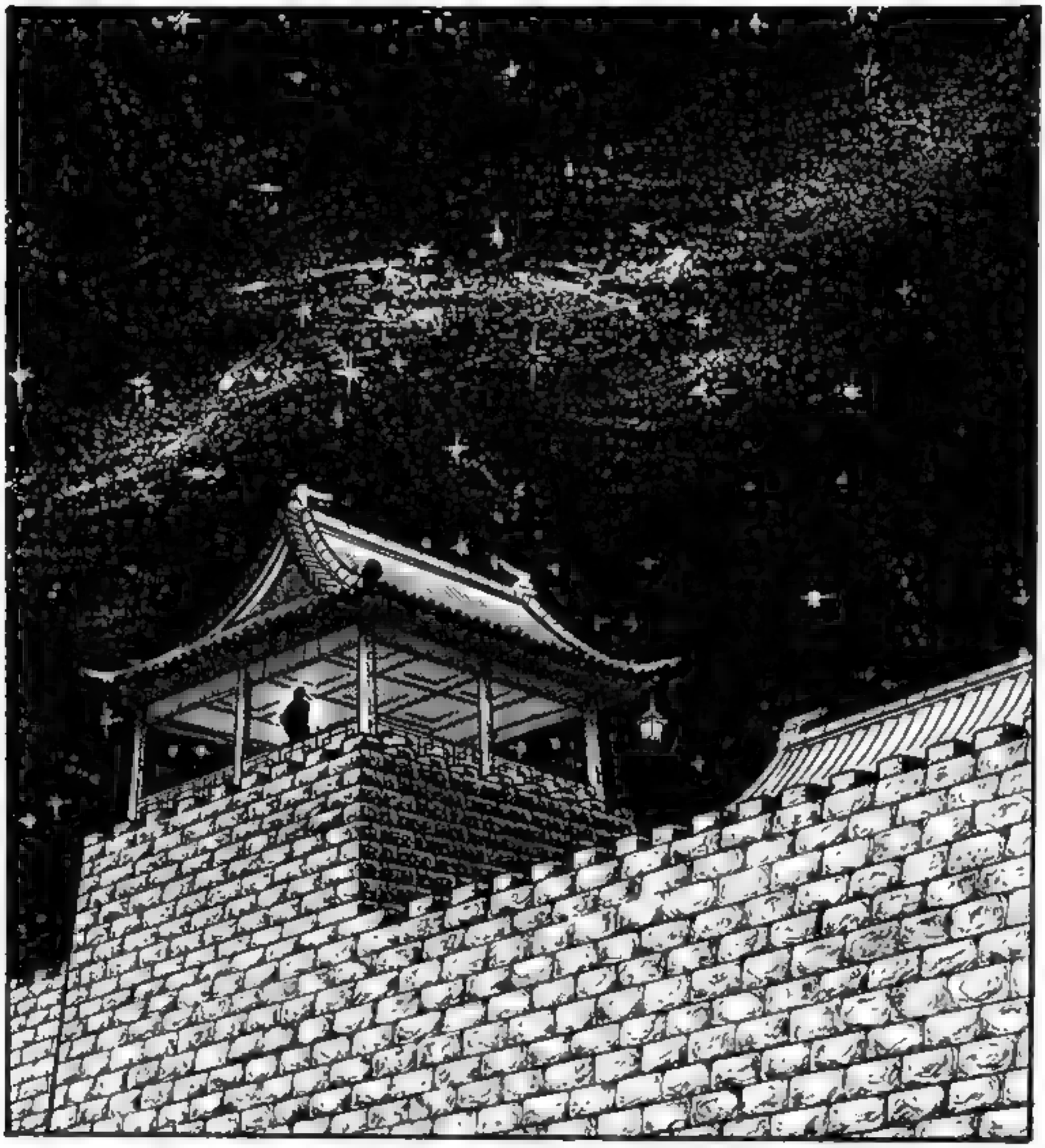
I AM SURE THAT BRAVE AND LOYAL RETAINERS OF YOUR HIGHNESS WILL COME TO HELP ONCE THEY HEAR THAT SIR HAS RETURNED TO LUOYANG

THEN WE SHALL WORK HARD TO MAKE THIS PLACE LIVEABLE ONCE MORE.

JUST AS DONG CHENG HAD PREDICTED, ONCE WORD OF THE EMPEROR'S RETURN TO LUOYANG HAD SPREAD, THE CITIZENS BEGAN TO SHOW UP AS WELL.


THEY BUILT HOUSES AND PLOUGHED THE FIELDS,


AND WITH EACH DAY, LUOYANG WAS LOOKING LESS LIKE A WASTELAND



I, TOO, AM JUST ONE STAR AMONG MANY IN THOSE STARRY SKIES.

THOUGH IT DOES NOT SEEM SO, BOTH THE HEAVENS AND THE LANDS ARE IN CONSTANT MOTION.

THE TIME FOR THIS CAO CAO TO GRAB AHOLD OF HIS TRUE LIFE IS FROM NOW ON.

BUT BEING BORN BETWEEN THE HEAVENS AND THIS LAND, I MUST LIVE A LIFE BEFITTING A TRUE MAN.

FROM NOW ON ...

SO THIS IS WHERE MY LORD WAS.

JUST LOOK AT THIS BEAUTIFUL NIGHT SKY WE HAVE TONIGHT.

I FELT THAT I HAD A LITTLE TOO MUCH TO DRINK SO I WAS TAKING A NIGHT STROLL TO CLEAR MY HEAD.

THE MEN WERE ALL SURPRISED TO SEE THAT SIR HAD SUDDENLY DISAPPEARED FROM THE TABLE.

BUT I SHAN'T BE SATISFIED WITH JUST THIS MUCH.

IT CERTAINLY IS A MOST BEAUTIFUL NIGHT, MY LORD.

WHAT IS IT?

ELDER BROTHER!

I SEE.

SO HE'S COMING AT LAST ...

WE'VE RECEIVED A REPORT THAT AN IMPERIAL MESSENGER IS COMING TO SPEAK WITH YOU, BROTHER.

I ALWAYS BELIEVED THAT THIS DAY WOULD COME.

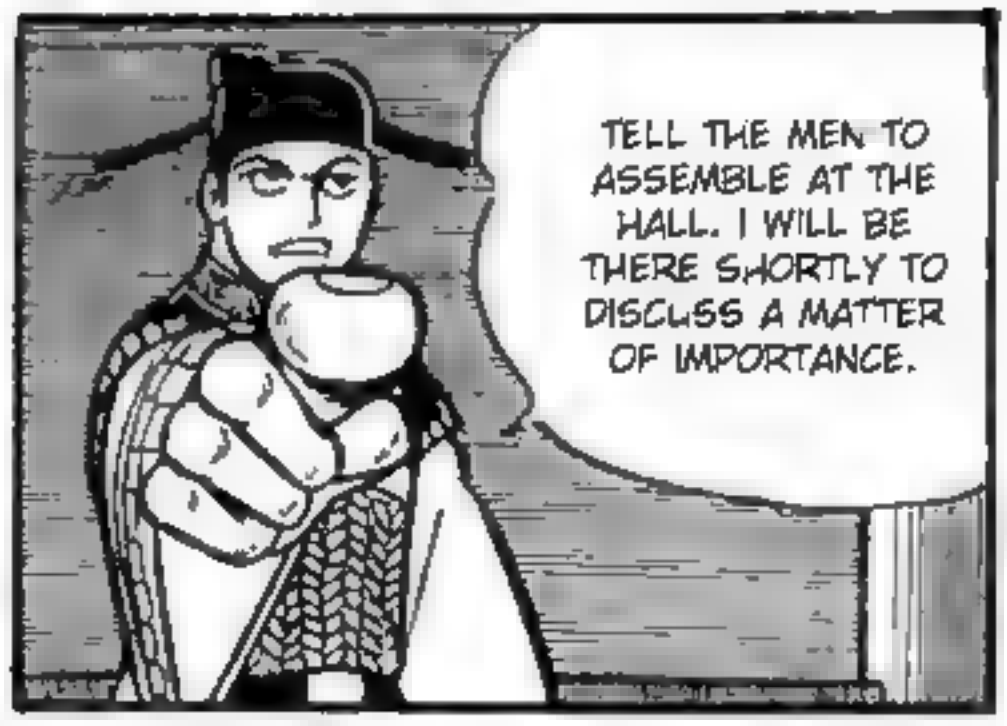
HMM? DID YOU ALREADY KNOW ABOUT IT?

YES, MY LORD.

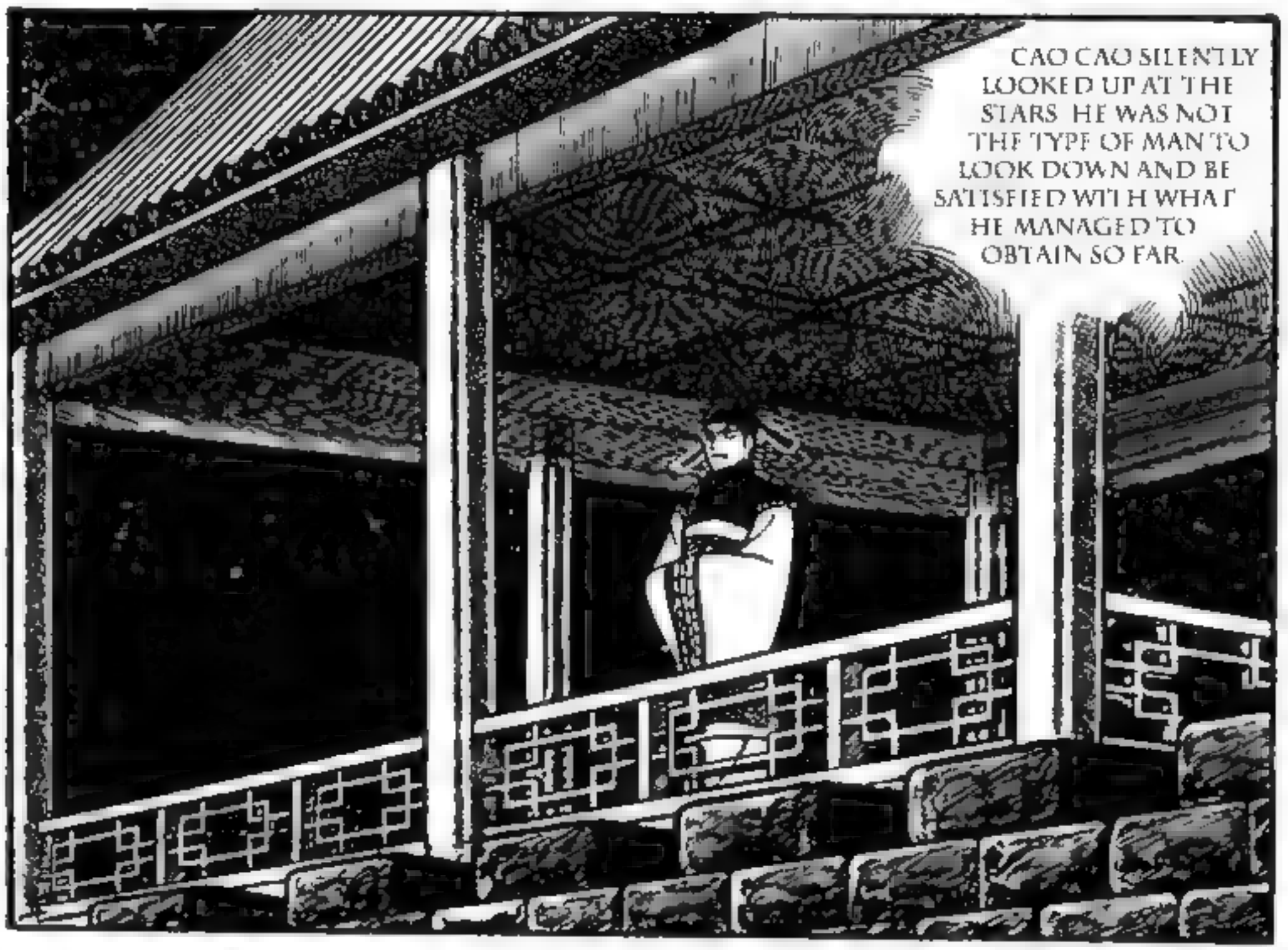
?

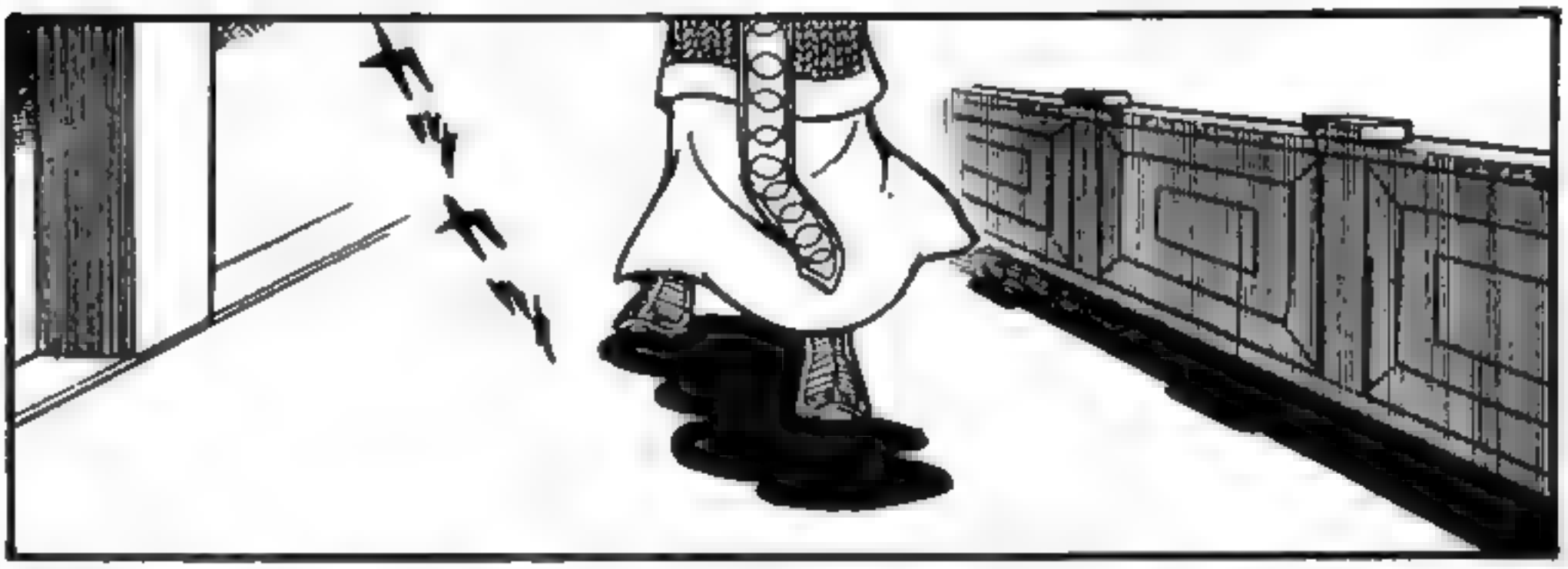
ARE THE MEN STILL UP?

YES, BROT-HER.


TELL THE MEN TO ASSEMBLE AT THE HALL. I WILL BE THERE SHORTLY TO DISCUSS A MATTER OF IMPORTANCE.

SO THE EMPEROR HIMSELF HAS AT LAST COME SEEKING FOR MY HELP...


CAO CAO SILENTLY LOOKED UP AT THE STARS. HE WAS NOT THE TYPE OF MAN TO LOOK DOWN AND BE SATISFIED WITH WHAT HE MANAGED TO OBTAIN SO FAR.

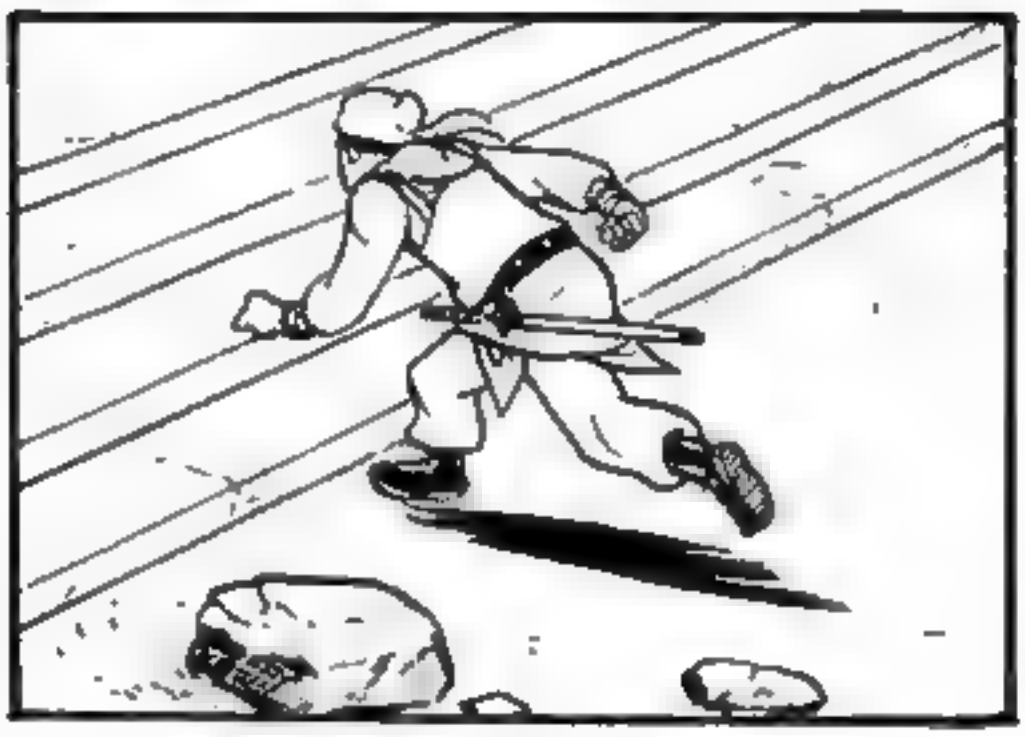


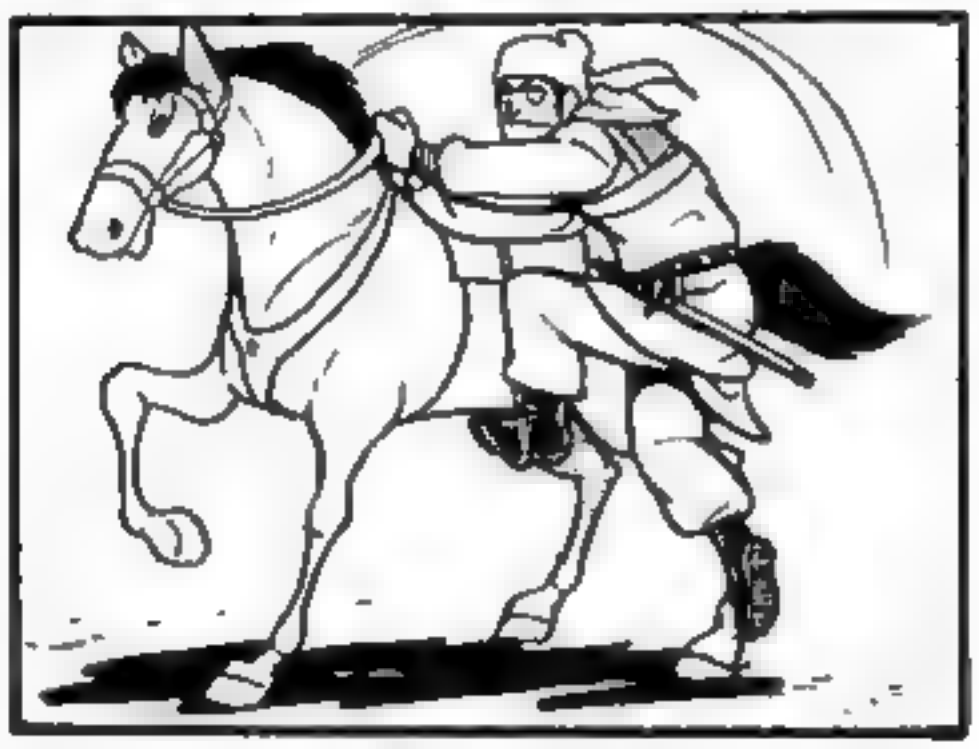
THE IMPERIAL MESSENGER IS HEADED HERE AS WE SPEAK.

AS I'M SURE YOU GENTLEMEN ARE AWARE OF ALREADY,

I HAVE ALREADY MADE MY DECISION.

A TRUE HERO IS SOMEONE WHO SAVES HIS NATION AND THE EMPEROR! THUS WE SHALL DO EVERYTHING IN OUR POWER TO LEND ASSISTANCE TO HIS HIGHNESS WHEN THE IMPERIAL MESSENGER COMES!





WHAT IS IT!?

I HAVE AN URGENT NEWS TO REPORT, SIR!

THOSE TWO HAVE CALLED A TRUCE!?

WHAT!?

LI JUE AND GUO SI HAVE MADE PEACE WITH EACH OTHER AND ARE HEADED HERE TO RETRIEVE THE EMPEROR!

YOUR HIGHNESS, IT IS AS THE MESSENGER REPORTED.

I BELIEVE WE SHOULD FLEE HERE AND SEEK SHELTER FROM CAO CAO, YOUR HIGHNESS.

WHAT DO YOU SUGGEST I DO, DONG CHENG?

THAT'S RIGHT. WHO'S TO SAY THAT HE WON'T TURN OUT TO BE ANOTHER DONG ZHUO? WE MUST HOLD OUT HERE AND FIGHT BACK FOR AS LONG AS WE CAN!

I OBJECT! CAO CAO IS AN UNPREDICTABLE MAN.

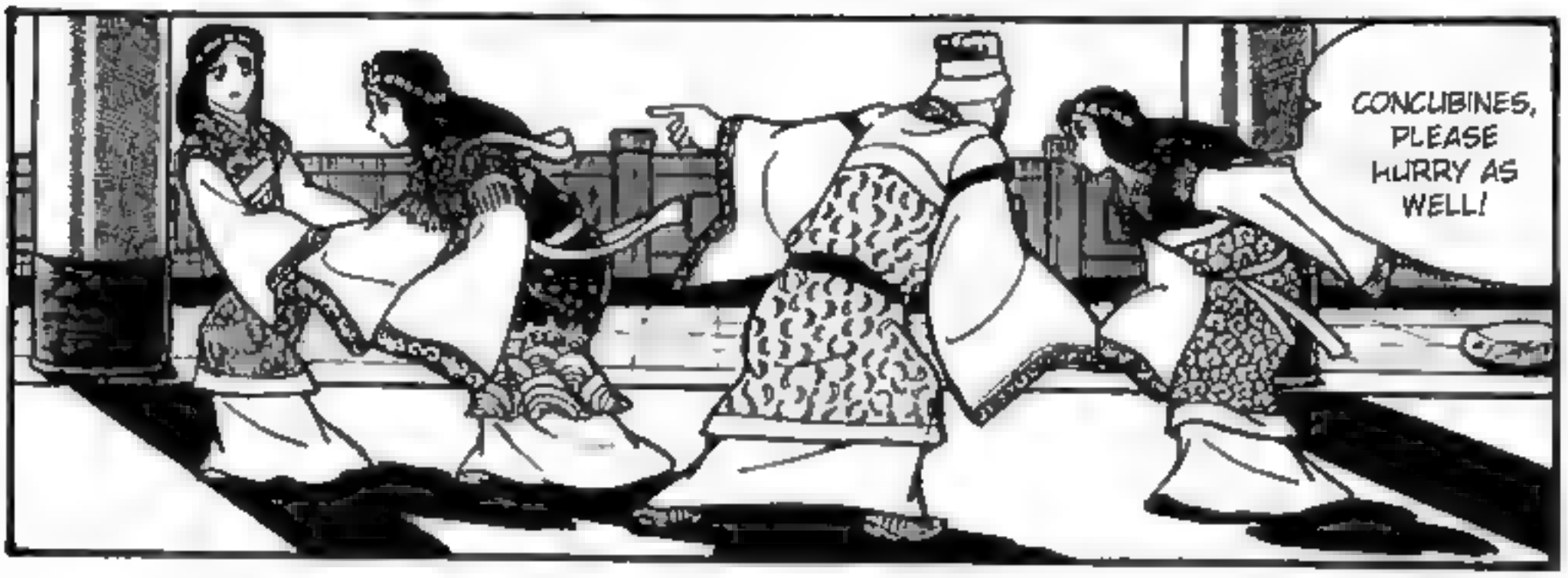
PERHAPS IT IS JUST ME BUT I FAIL TO SEE ANY SOLDIERS HERE TO FIGHT OFF LI JUE AND GUO SI!

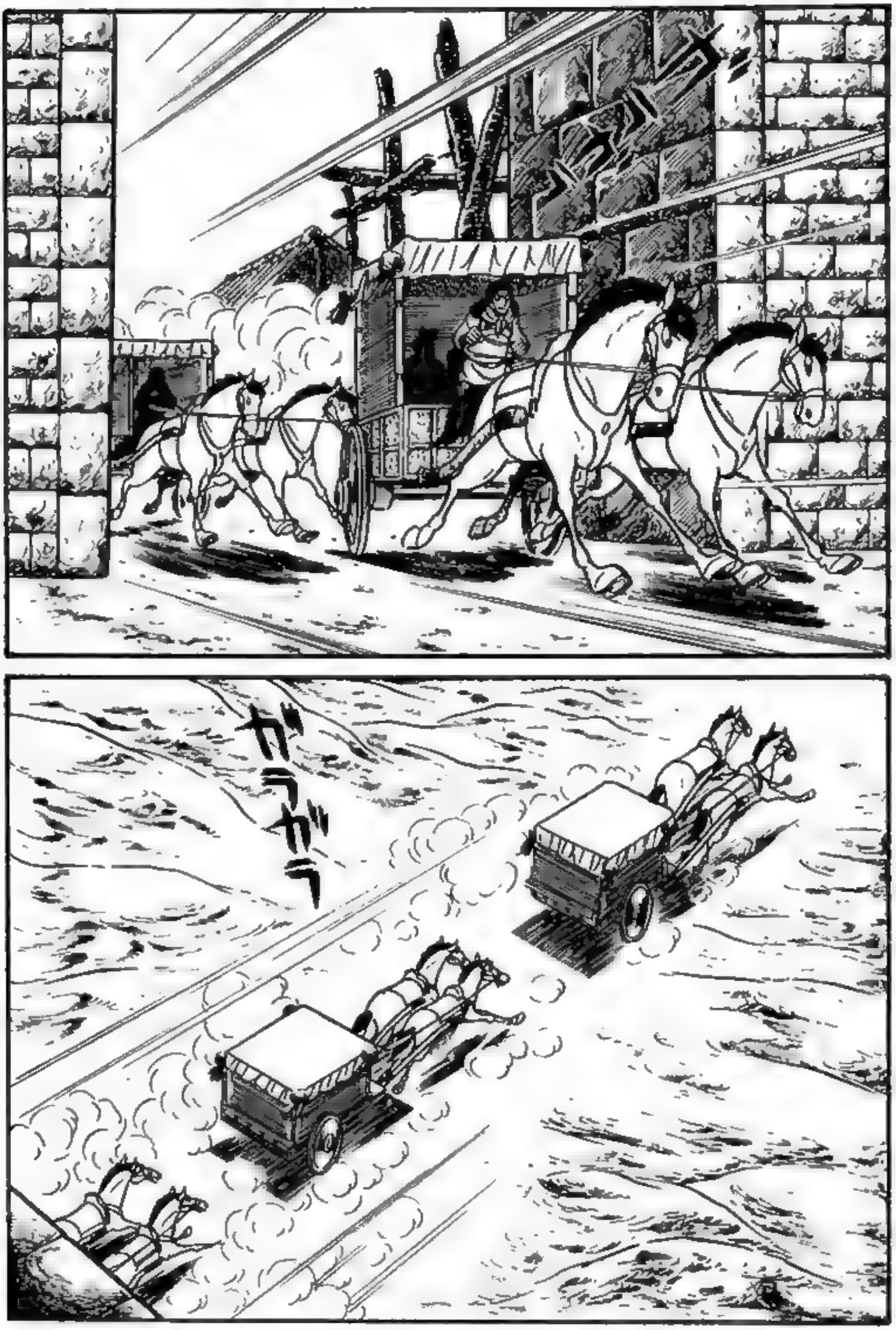
FIGHT!?

UMM....
NGHH...

NOT ONLY THAT, I CANNOT EVEN SEE A SINGLE DEFENSIVE WALL! JUST HOW DO YOU SUGGEST WE "HOLD OUT"!?

YES, YOU'RE RIGHT.
PLEASE YOUR HIGHNESS, WE MUST ESCAPE FROM HERE AS FAST AS POSSIBLE!


CONCUBINES, PLEASE HURRY AS WELL!



L-LI JUE AND GUO SI'S ARMY IS ALREADY HERE!!!

HMM!?

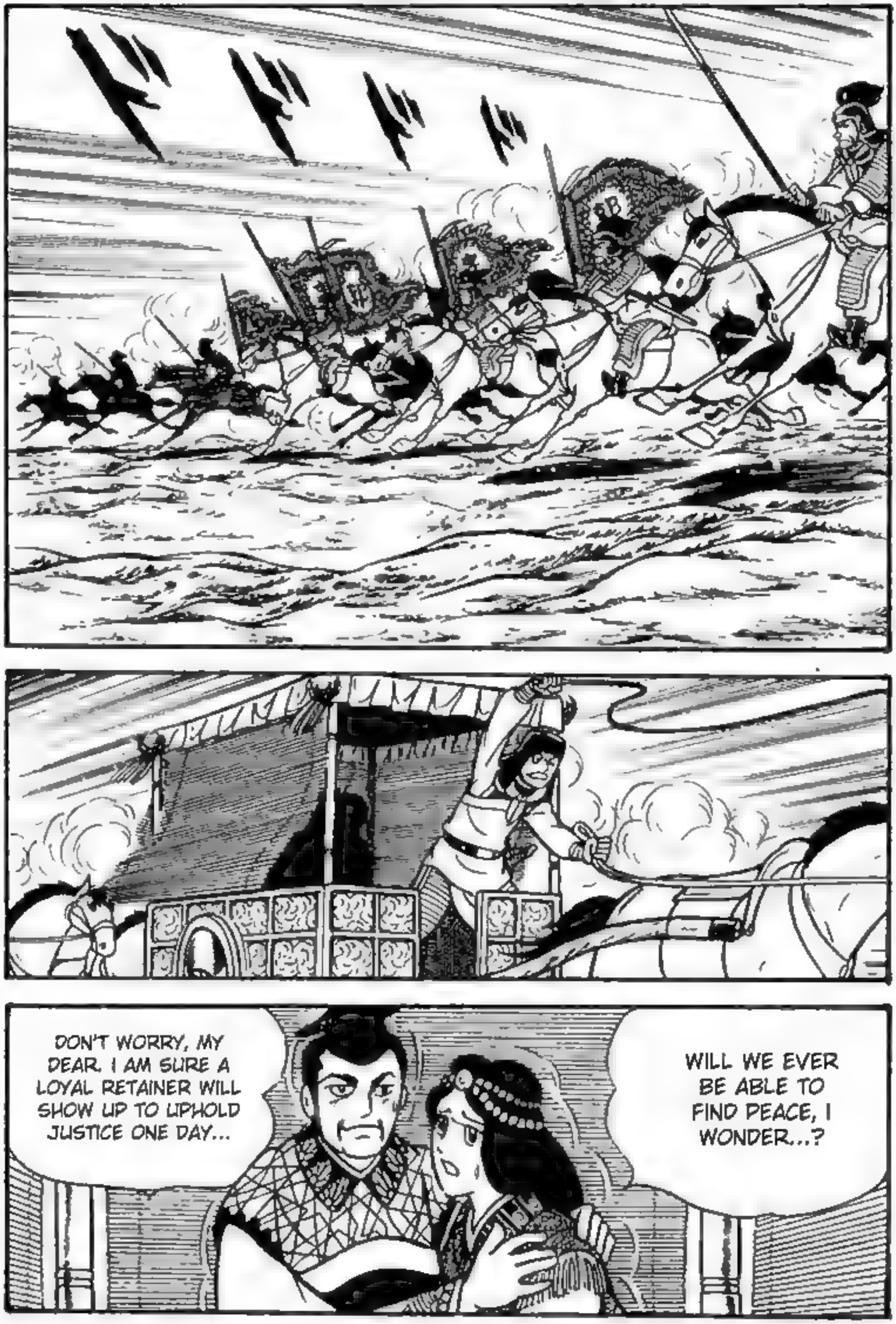
FASTER! WE MUST ESCAPE AT ALL COSTS!

A CHARIOT JUST CAME OUT FROM LUOYANG IN A HURRY.

HMM?

ALRIGHT, AFTER THOSE CHARIOTS! DON'T LET 'EM ESCAPE!

COULD IT BE... THE EMPE-ROR...?


DON'T WORRY, MY DEAR. I AM SURE A LOYAL RETAINER WILL SHOW UP TO UPHOLD JUSTICE ONE DAY...
WILL WE EVER BE ABLE TO FIND PEACE, I WONDER...?

AHHHH!

AHH!

SIR, WE'RE SURROUNDED! THERE'S NOWHERE TO ESCAPE ANYMORE!

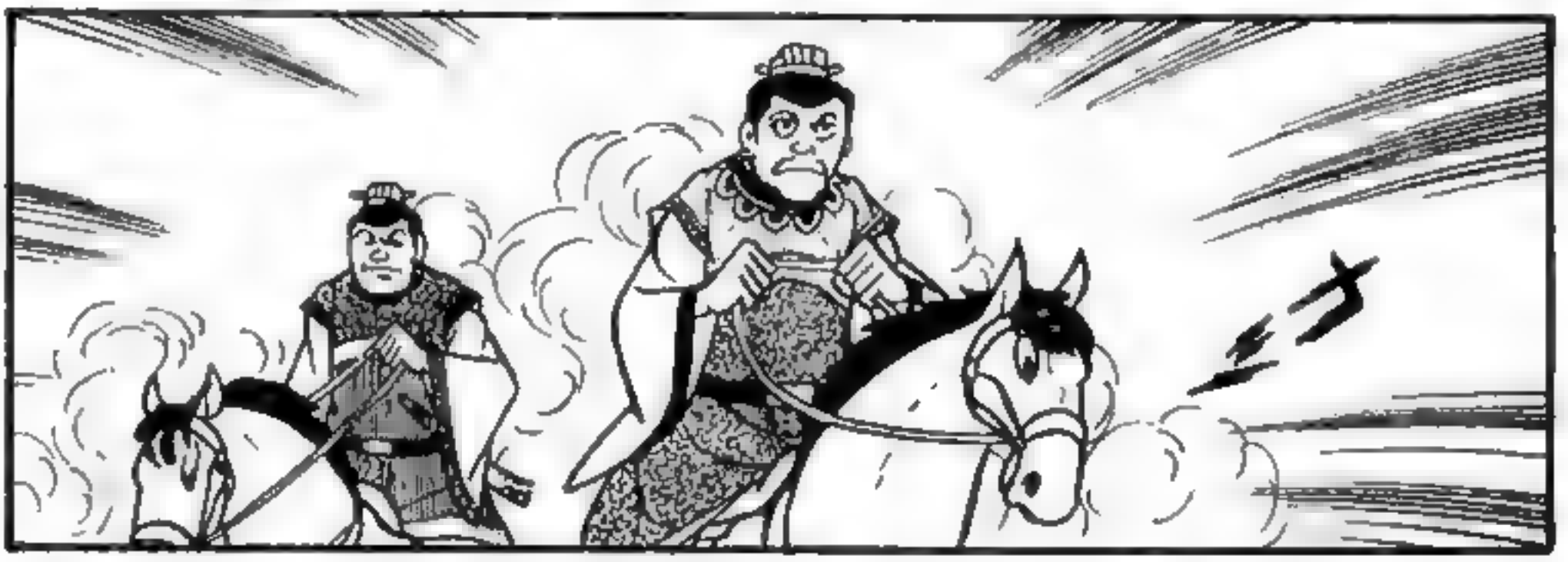
T-THERE'S AN ENORMOUS ARMY AHEAD OF US AS WELL!

TURN AROUND! WE MUST FIND A WAY TO ESCAPE!

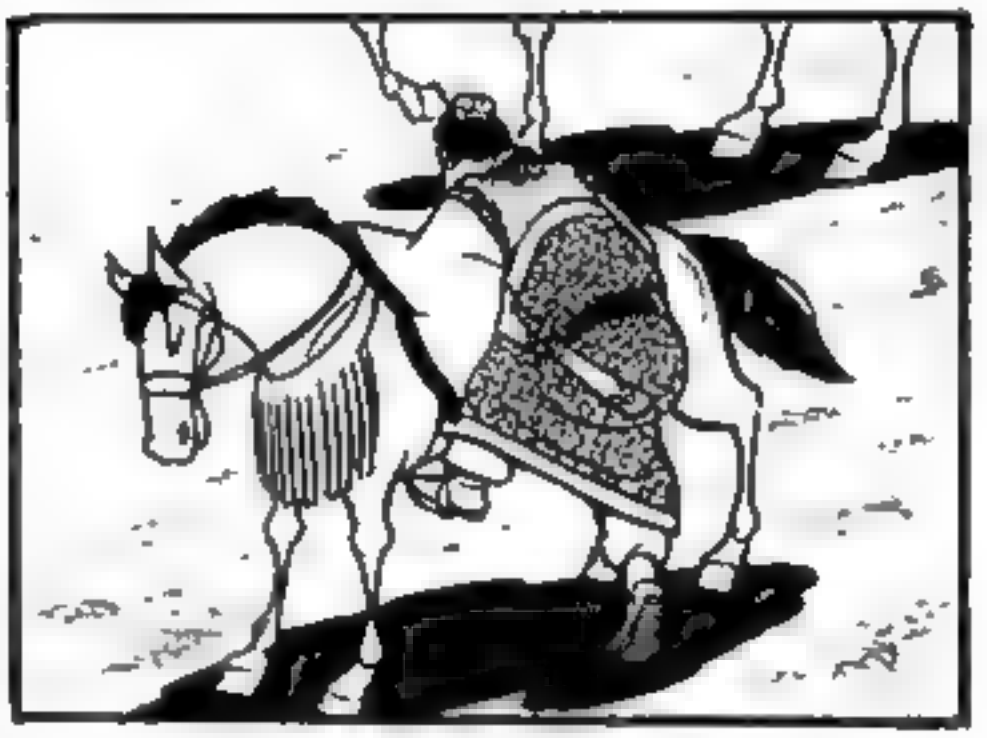
HMM?

THAT'S THE IMPE-
RIAL MESSENGER
WE SENT TO CAO
CAO A FEW DAYS
AGO!

WAIT!



YOUR
HIGHNESS, I
HAVE RETURNED
SAFELY.



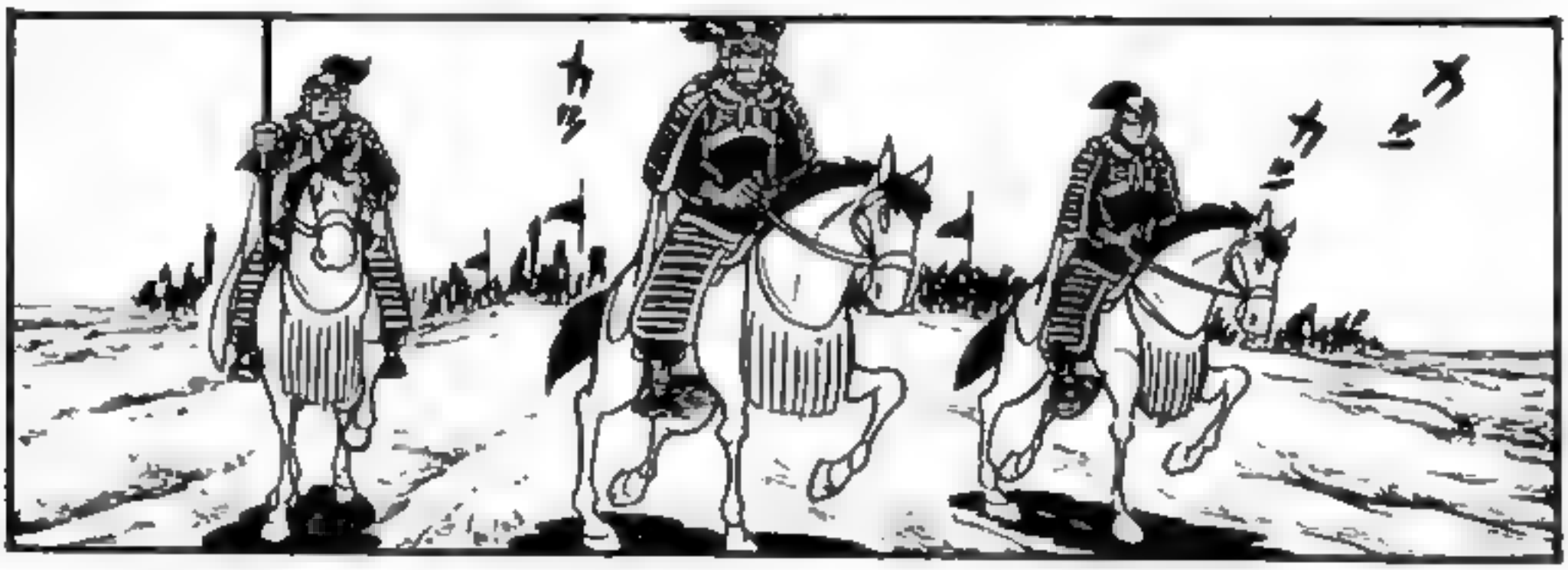
BUT WHAT OF THAT ARMY BEHIND YOU?

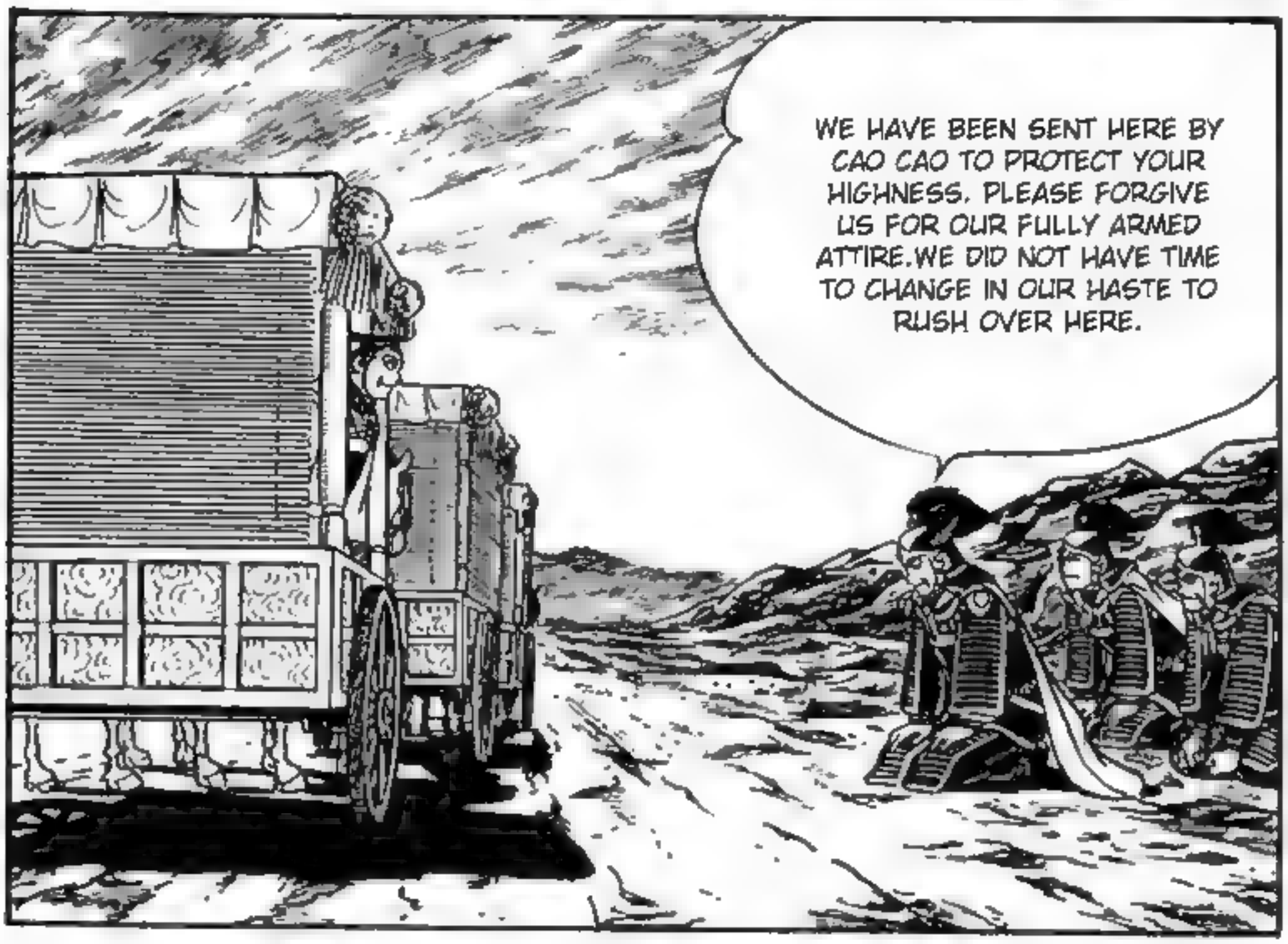
G-GOOD WORK...

S-SO THEY'RE ALLIES ...?

AS SOON AS I MET WITH CAO CAO AT SHANDONG, HE MOBILIZED AN ARMY OF 50,000 TO PROTECT YOUR HIGHNESS.

YES!




WE HAVE BEEN SENT HERE BY CAO CAO TO PROTECT YOUR HIGHNESS. PLEASE FORGIVE US FOR OUR FULLY ARMED ATTIRE.WE DID NOT HAVE TIME TO CHANGE IN OUR HASTE TO RUSH OVER HERE.

I WOULD RATHER REWARD YOU FOR SHOWING GREAT COURAGE AND LOYALTY TOWARDS ME.

YOU NEED NOT TO APOLOGIZE FOR YOUR ATTIRE. HOW COULD I CRITICISE THOSE WHO RUSHED OVER TO HELP ME?

I THANK YOUR HIGHNESS FOR SUCH KIND WORDS. PLEASE WORRY NO MORE AND LEAVE YOUR HIGHNESS'S ENEMIES TO US.

AHH!

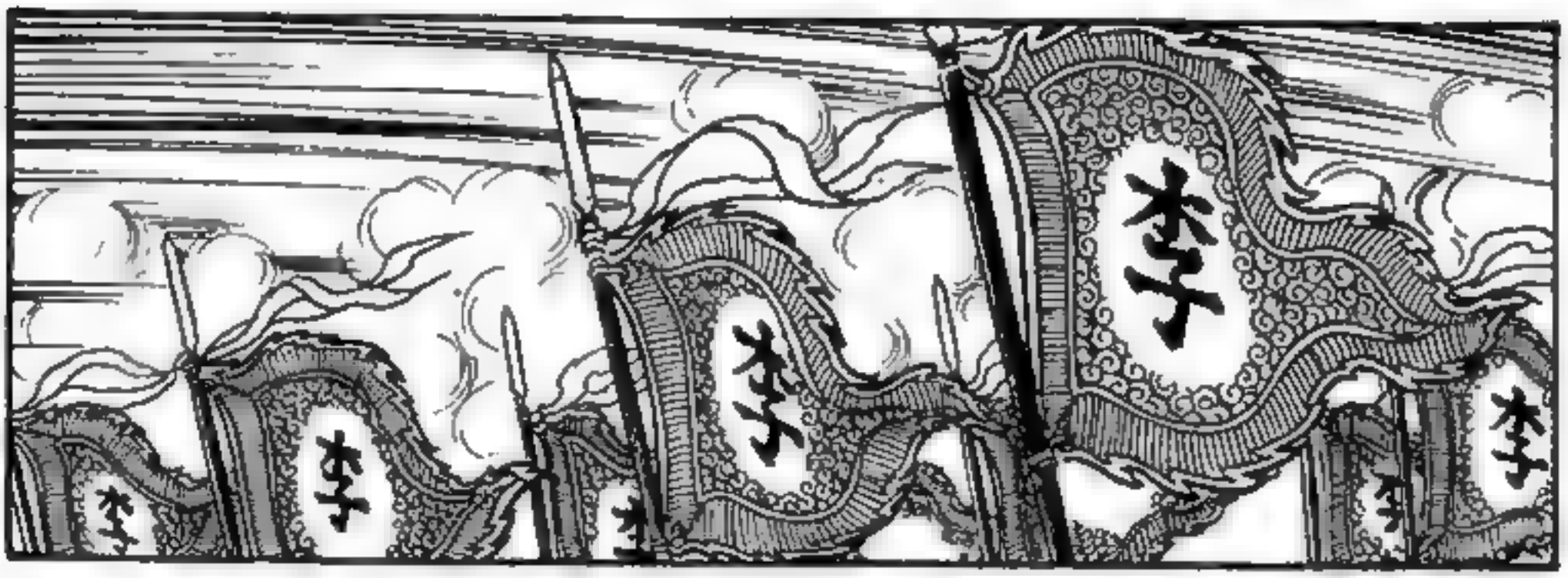
YOUR HIGHNESS, AN ENEMY ARMY HAS APPEARED TO THE RIGHT!

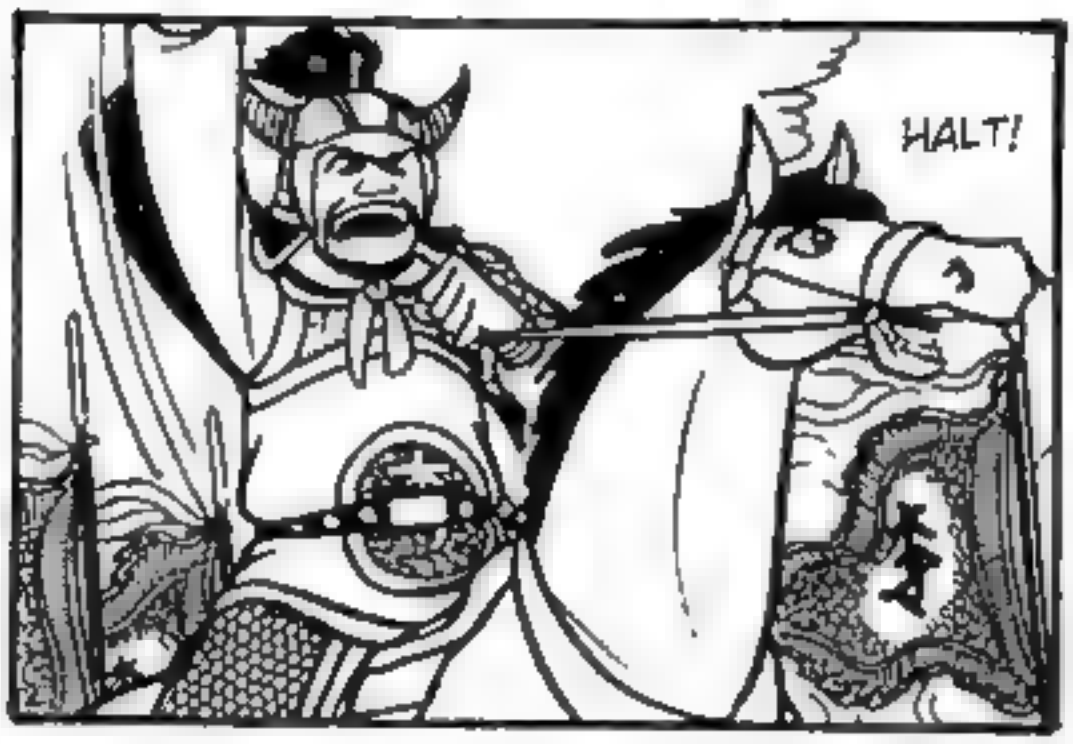
THEY TOO, ARE ALLIES...!?

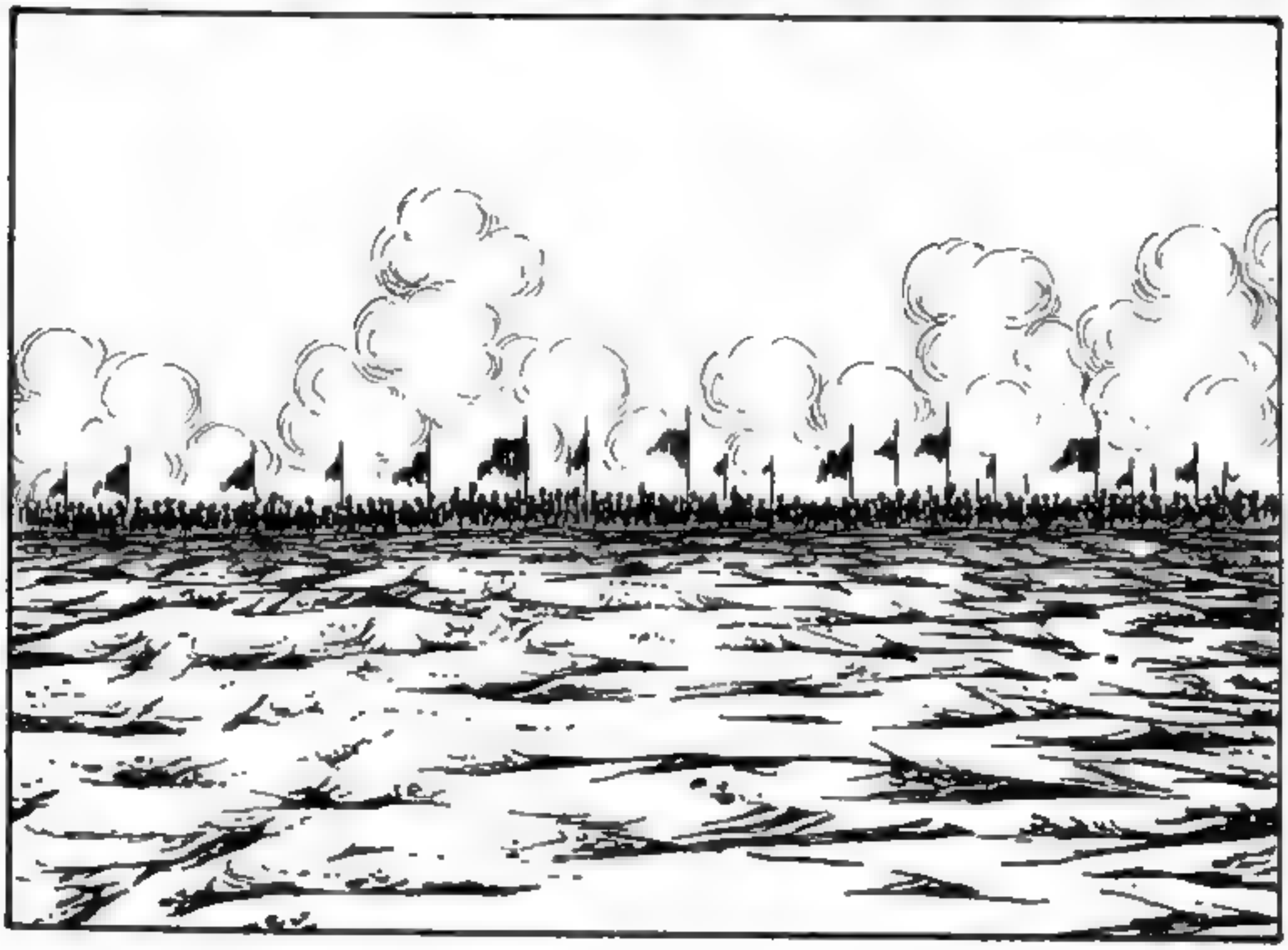
OHHH!

NO NEED TO FEAR, YOUR HIGHNESS. THAT IS THE ARMY OF CAO CAO'S YOUNGER BROTHER, CAO HONG, SENT HERE AS REINFORCEMENTS JUST IN CASE.

*LI(李) FOR LI JUE







MAYBE IT'S SOME SORT OF A TRICK...?

THE EMPEROR SHOULD HAVE ONLY FLED WITH HIS CONCUBINES AND SOME RETAINERS... THERE SHOULD BE NO WAY THAT HE'D HAVE AN ARMY THAT LARGE ..

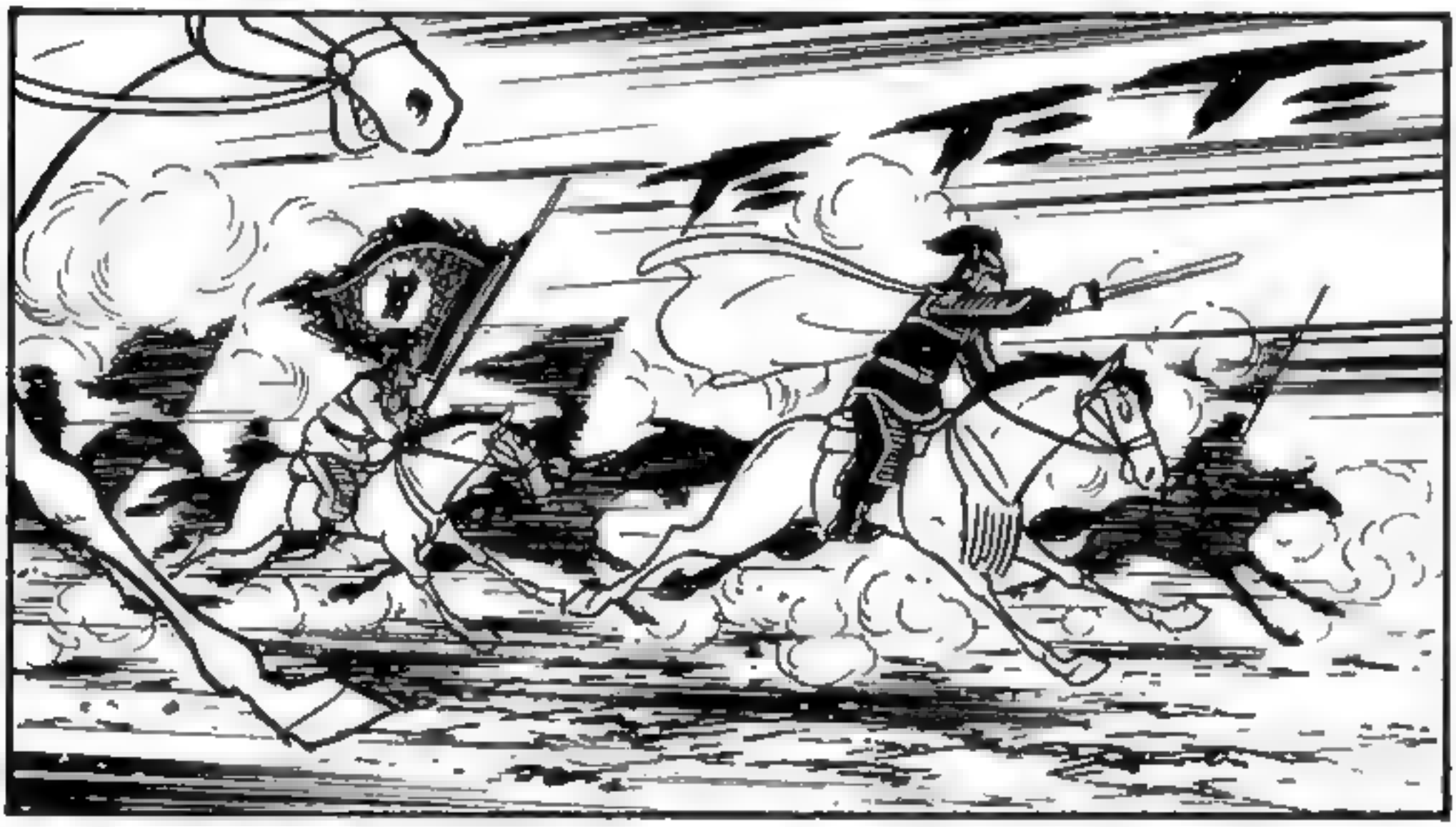
I DON'T KNOW. I WONDER WHERE THEY COULD HAVE COME FROM?

WHOSE ARMY IS THAT?

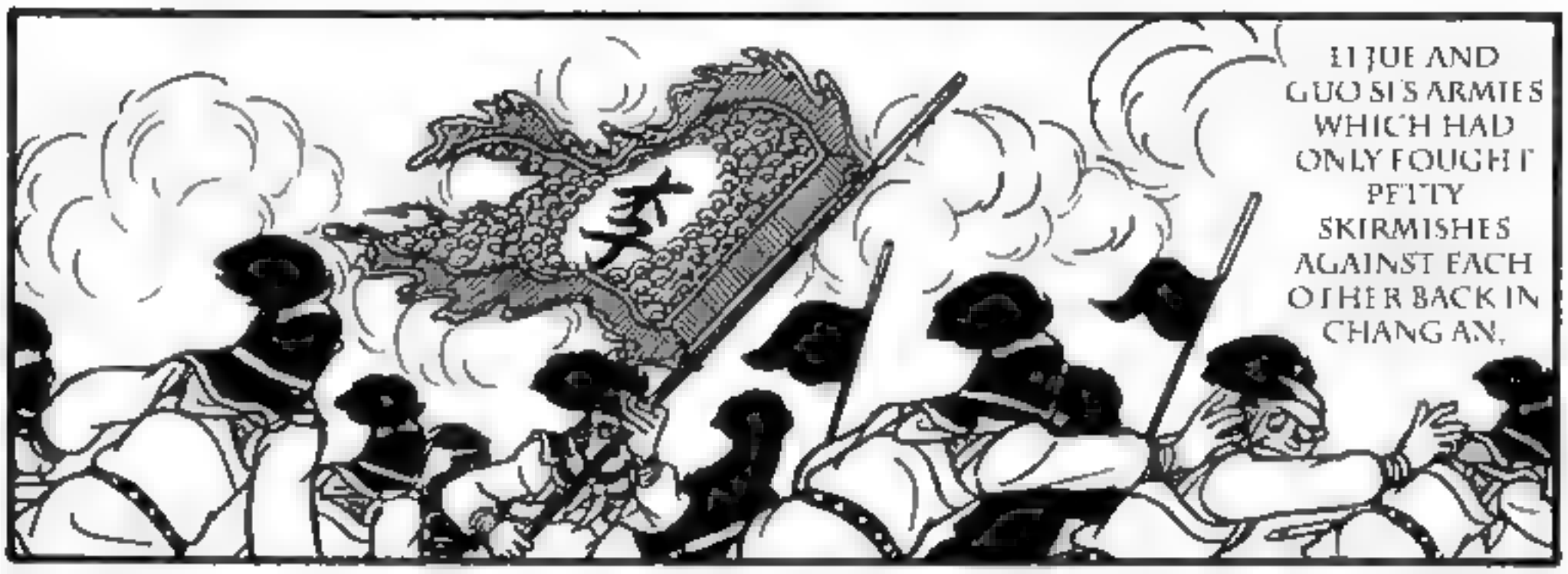
ALRIGHT, CHARGE!

YES, THAT MUST BE IT. THERE'S NO WAY AN ARMY THAT BIG COULD JUST SUDDENLY APPEAR TO HINDER US.

BY SLAYING ALL HIS HIGHNESS'S ENEMIES!
ALRIGHT MEN, LET US CARRY OUT OUR DUTY,

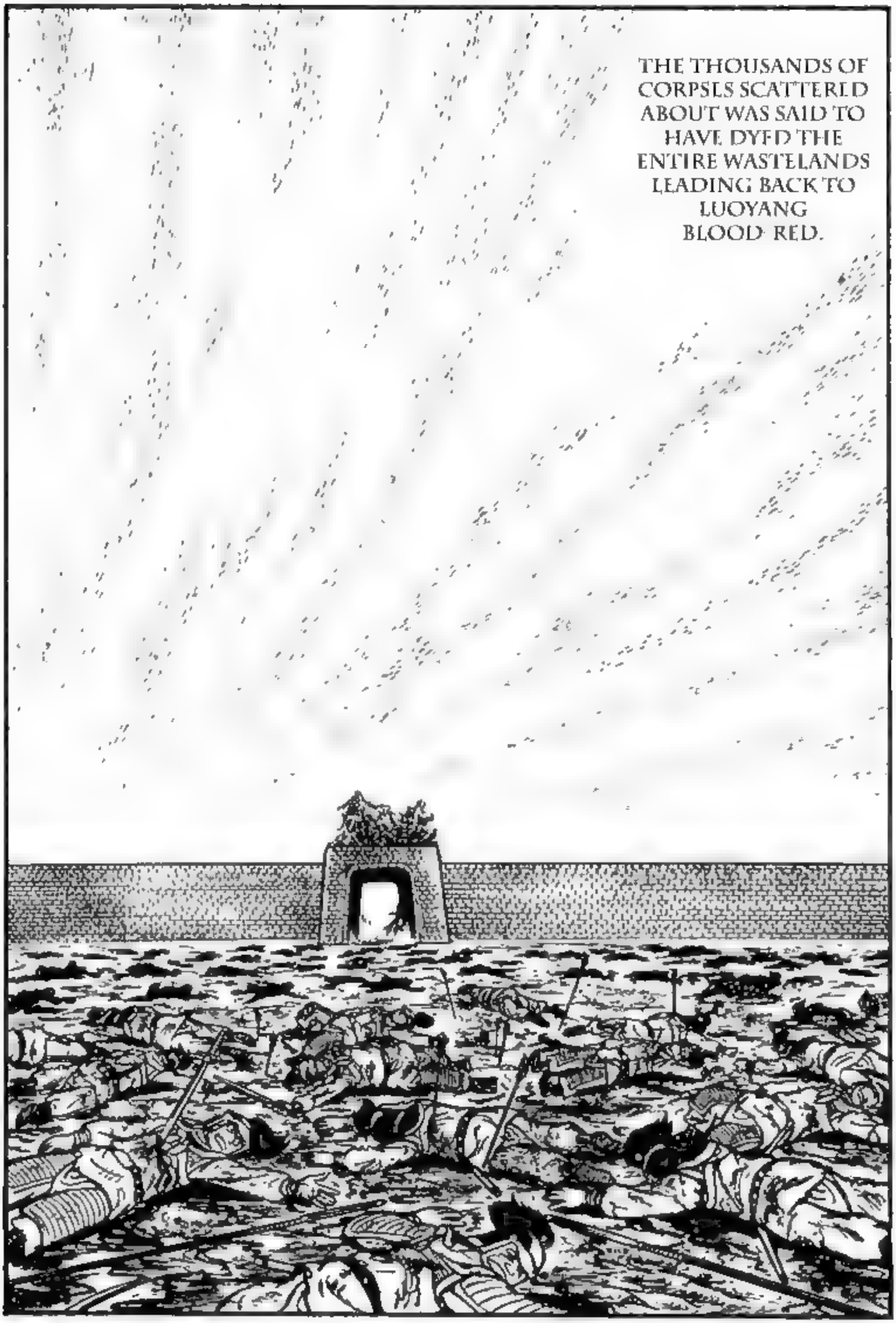


CAO(曹) FOR CAO CAO, LI(李) FOR LI JUE

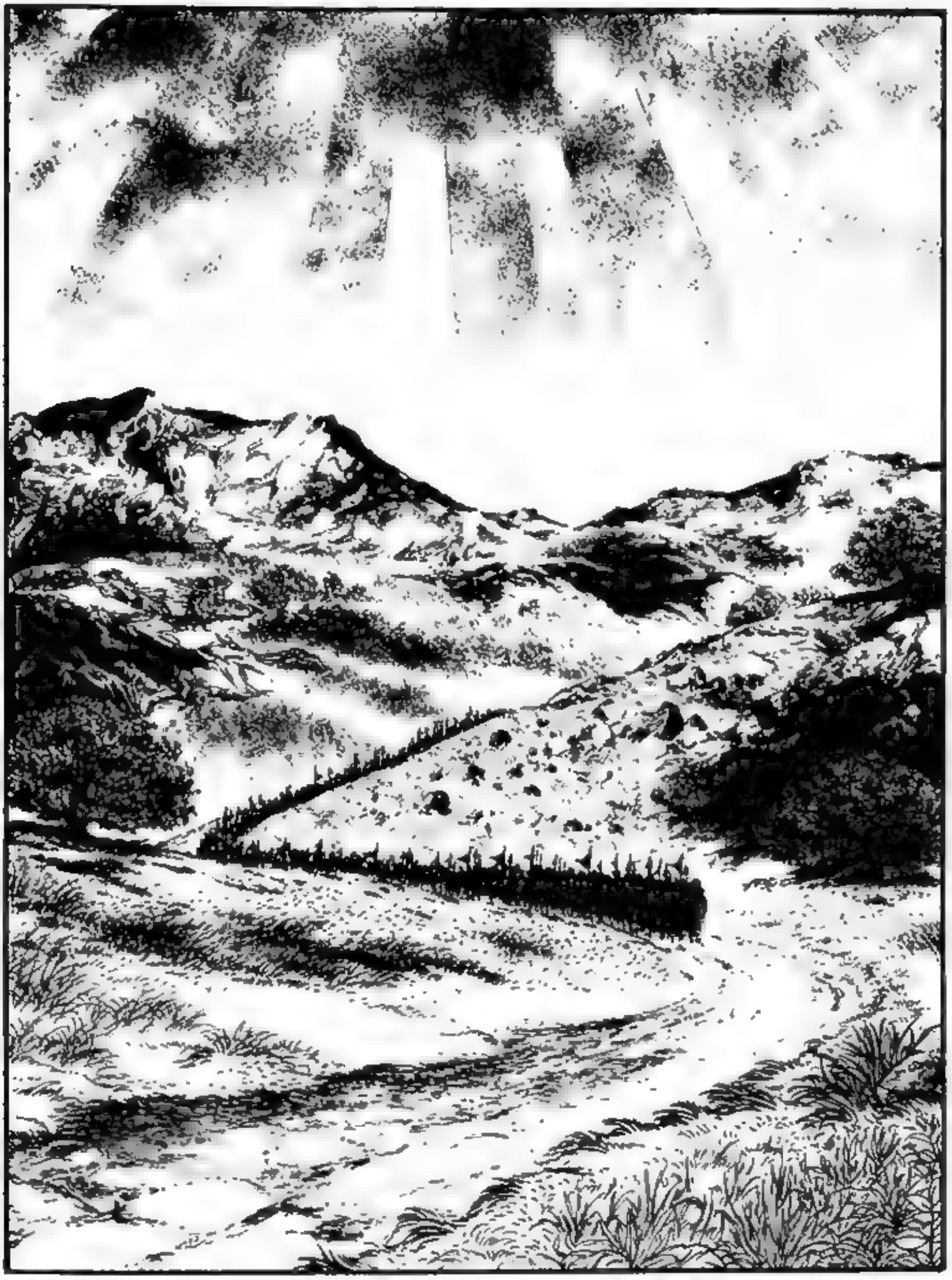

LIJUE AND GUO SI'S ARMIES WHICH HAD ONLY FOUGHT PETTY SKIRMISHES AGAINST EACH OTHER BACK IN CHANG AN.

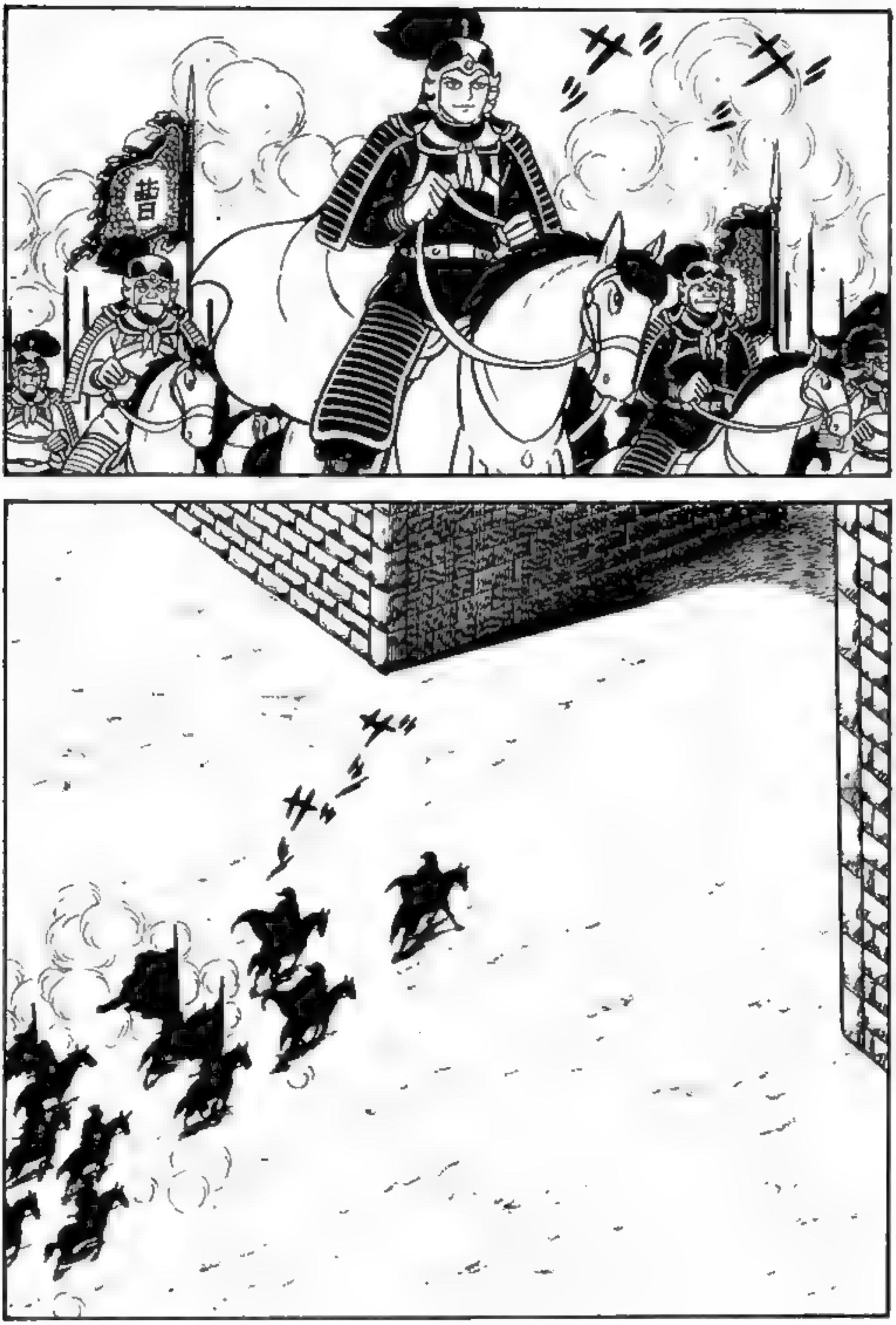
STOOD NO CHANCE AGAINST CAO CAO'S BATTLE HARDENED ARMY.

THE BATTLE WAS DECIDED IN A MATTER OF FEW HOURS


THE THOUSANDS OF CORPSES SCATTERED ABOUT WAS SAID TO HAVE DYED THE ENTIRE WASTELANDS LEADING BACK TO LUOYANG BLOOD RED.

THE LAND OF THE EARTH ELEMENT

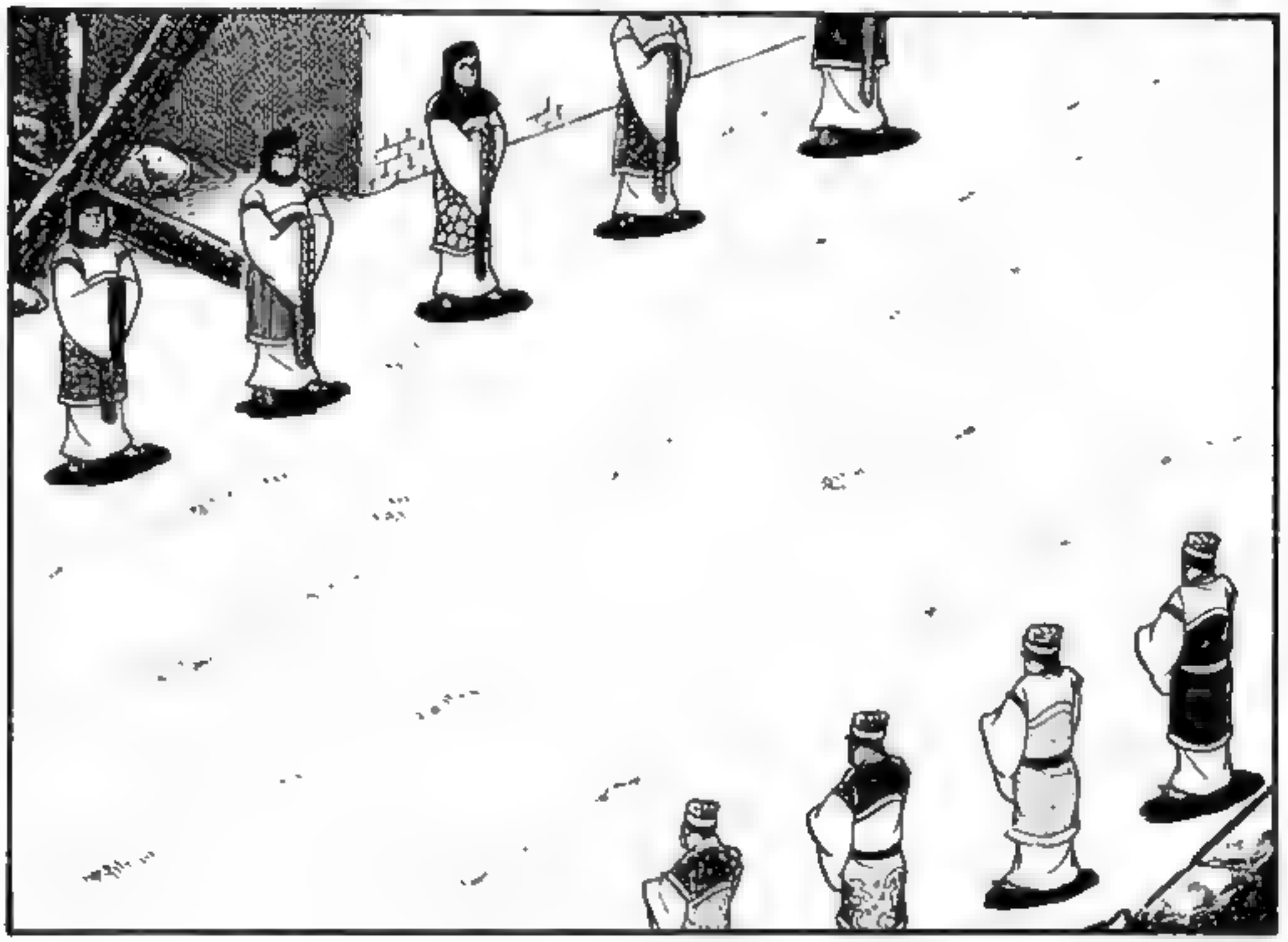


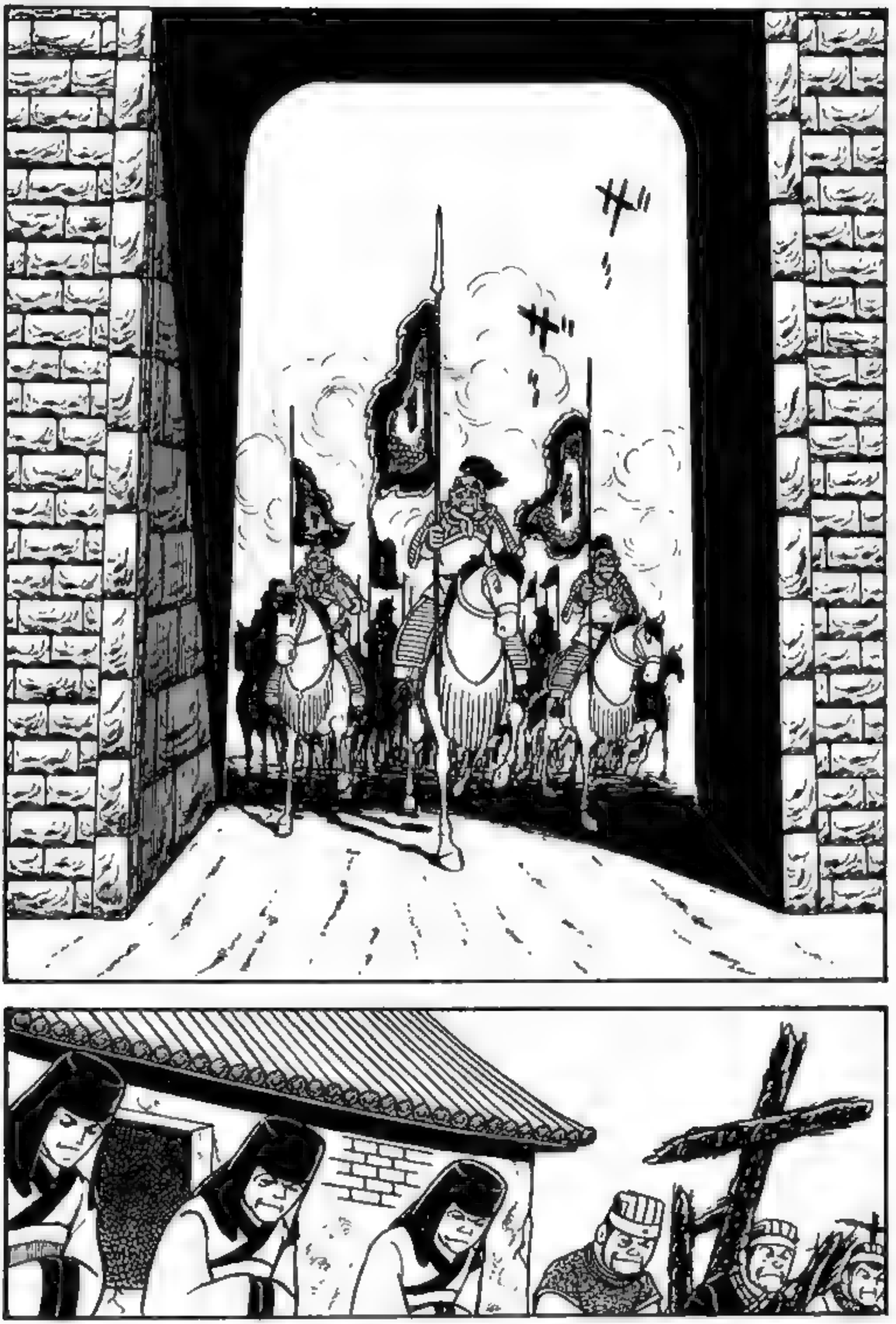

昔

GENERAL CAO CAO AND HIS MAIN ARMY HAVE ARRIVED!
THEY'VE ARRIVED!

AH, SO HE IS HERE AT LAST?
YOUR HIGHNESS, CAO CAO HAS ARRIVED HERE AT LUOYANG.

YES, YOUR HIGHNESS.
BE SURE TO GIVE HIM A GRAND WELCOME.





AND I THANK SIR FOR COMING ALL THE WAY OUT TO GREET ME.

IT IS A GREAT PLEASURE TO WELCOME GENERAL CAO CAO TO LUOYANG. HIS HIGHNESS WILL BE DELIGHTED THAT SIR HAS COME.

YES, RIGHT THIS WAY, SIR.

I WOULD LIKE TO PAY HIS HIGHNESS MY RESPECTS, IF I MAY.

YES, UNFORTUNATELY WE ARE LACKING IN THE MANPOWER TO CLEAR MANY OF THE RUBBLE AWAY.

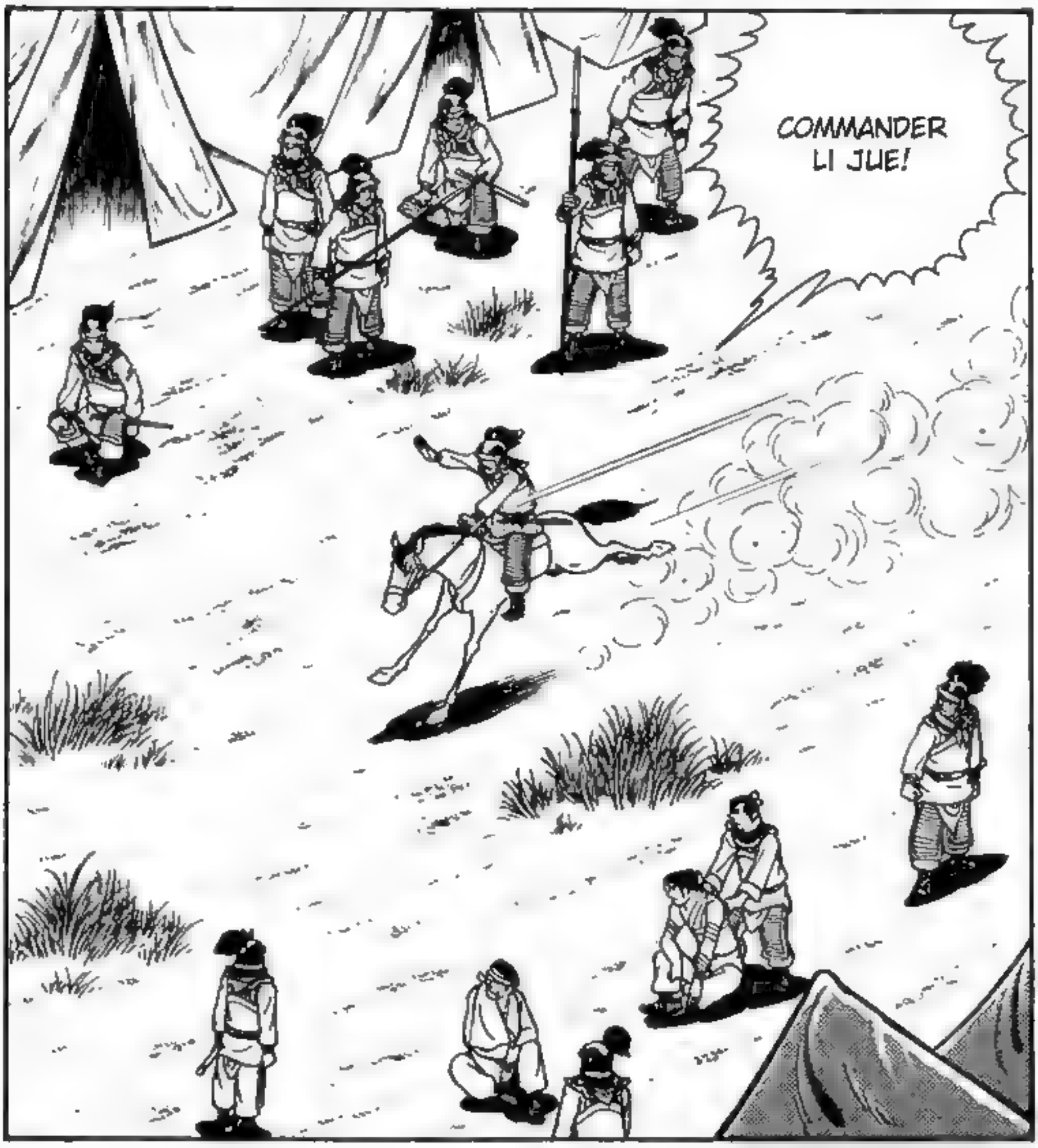
...TO SEE HIS HIGHNESS LIVING IN THESE RUINS IS A LITTLE...

PLEASE, COME CLOSER.

YOUR HIGHNESS, GENERAL CAO CAO IS HERE TO PAY HIS RESPECTS.

THANK YOU, YOUR HIGHNESS. I VOW TO ELIMINATE ALL WHO WISH TO HARM OR TAKE ADVANTAGE OF YOUR HIGHNESS.

I AM MOST DELIGHTED TO SEE SUCH A COURAGEOUS AND BRAVE RETAINER OF MINE MAKE THE LONG JOURNEY TO COME HERE.


COMMANDER
LI JUE!

I HAVE CONFIRMED THE IDENTITY OF THE ARMY THAT SUDDENLY APPEARED.

WHAT IS IT?

WHAT!?

THEY ARE CAO CAO'S ARMY, SIR.

AT THIS RATE, WE'LL BECOME HUNTED DOWN AS REBELS!

MMN... A TROUBLESOME DEVELOPMENT, INDEED...

THE EMPEROR SENT AN IMPERIAL MESSENGER TO CAO CAO EARLIER, ASKING FOR HIS HELP.

NOW WOULD BE THE BEST TIME TO ATTACK WHILE THEY ARE STILL TIRED FROM THEIR LONG JOURNEY.

WE HAVE NO CHOICE BUT TO DUKE IT OUT WITH CAO CAO'S FORCES.

SIR MUST NOT UNDER-ESTIMATE CAO CAO FOR HE HAS MANY CAPABLE ADVISORS AND MIGHTY GENERALS SERVING UNDER HIM.

WHAT IS IT?

NO, PLEASE WAIT, COMMANDER!

I BELIEVE IT WOULD BE BEST TO QUIETLY SURRENDER INSTEAD.

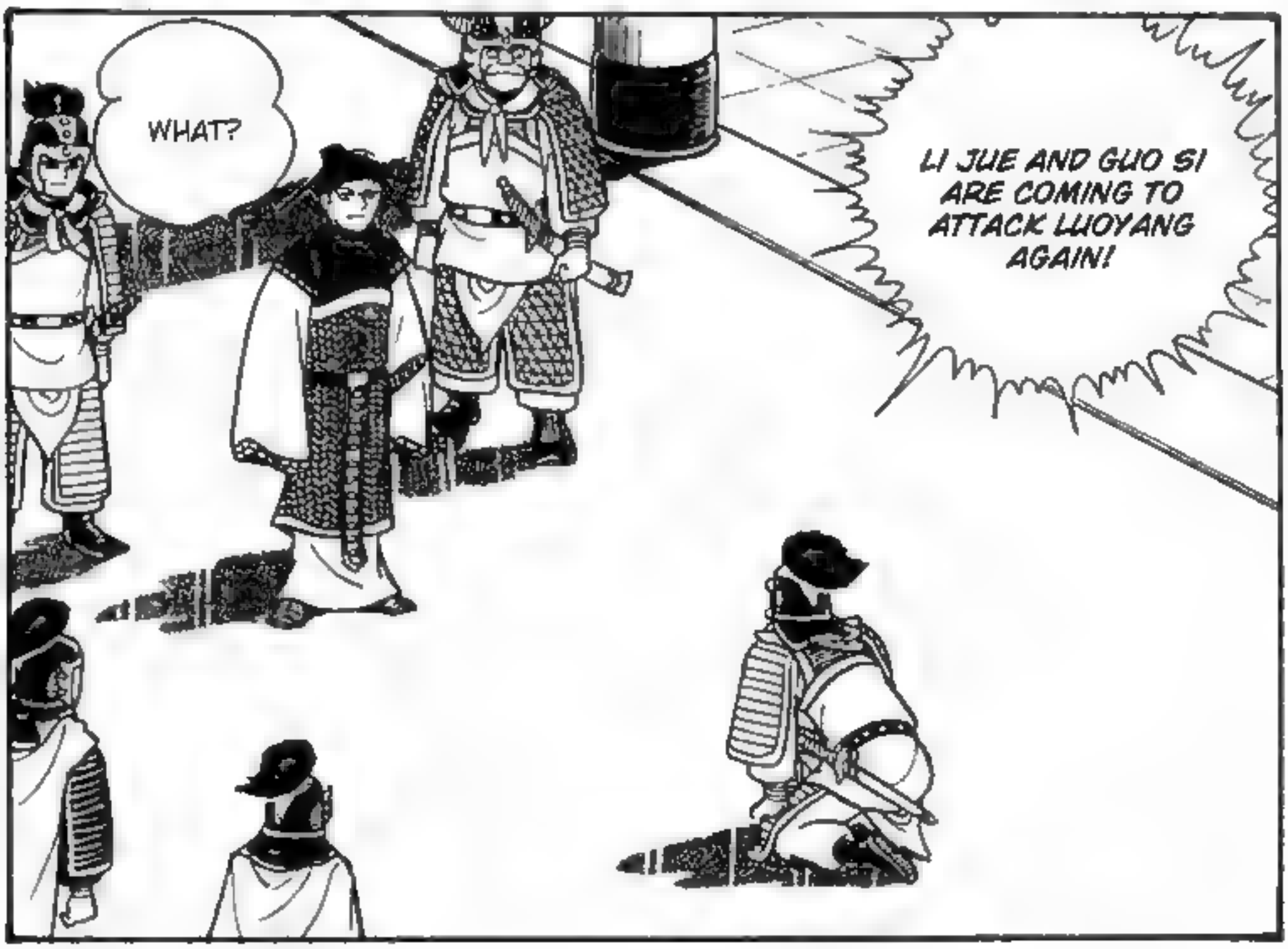
IT IS BECAUSE OF COWARDS LIKE YOU THAT WE SUFFERED A HUGE DEFEAT IN THE LAST BATTLE.

SURRENDER!? AND YOU STILL CALL YOURSELF A SOLDIER!?

BEHOLD THIS SIGHT AND TAKE NOTE OF WHAT HAPPENS TO COWARDS!

NOW LET US ATTACK!

MY LORD!


WHAT?
LI JUE AND GUO SI ARE COMING TO ATTACK LUOYANG AGAIN!

YES?

XU CHU!

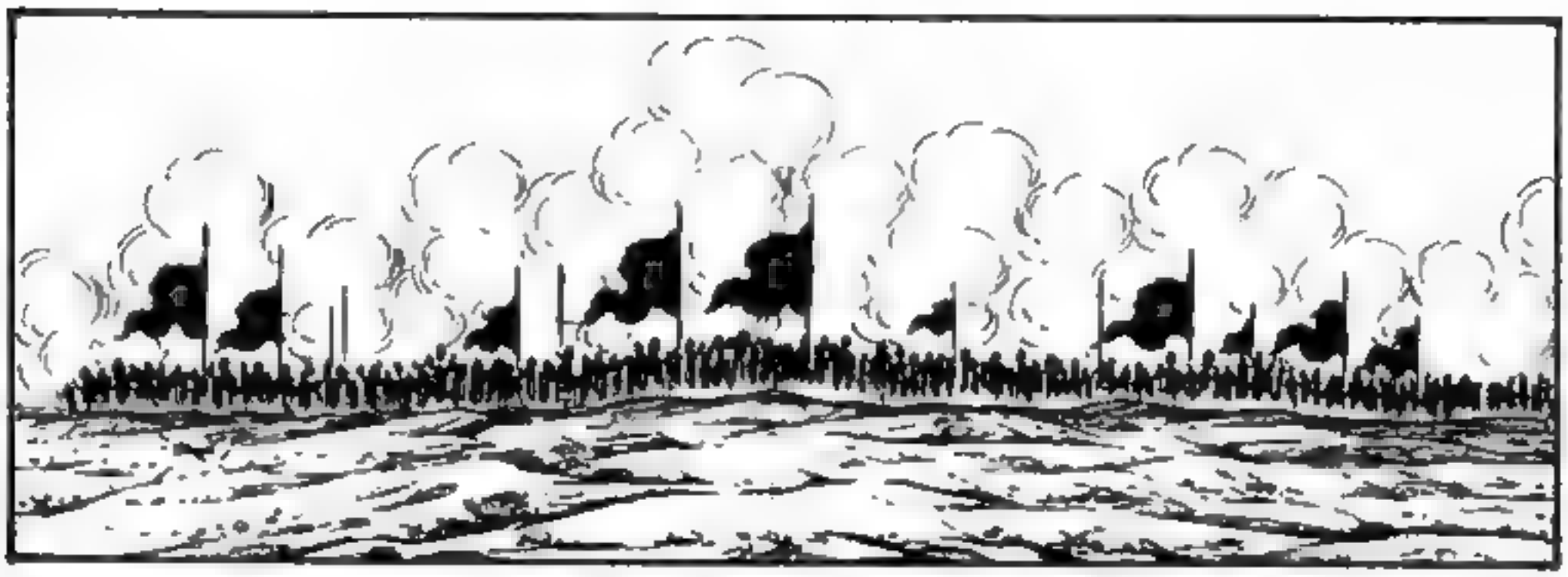
THOSE TWO STILL HAVEN'T HAD ENOUGH...?

YES, SIR.

THERE IS NO NEED FOR ME TO PERSONALLY DEAL WITH THOSE IDIOTS. I ASSUME YOU CAN TAKE CARE OF THIS ALONE?

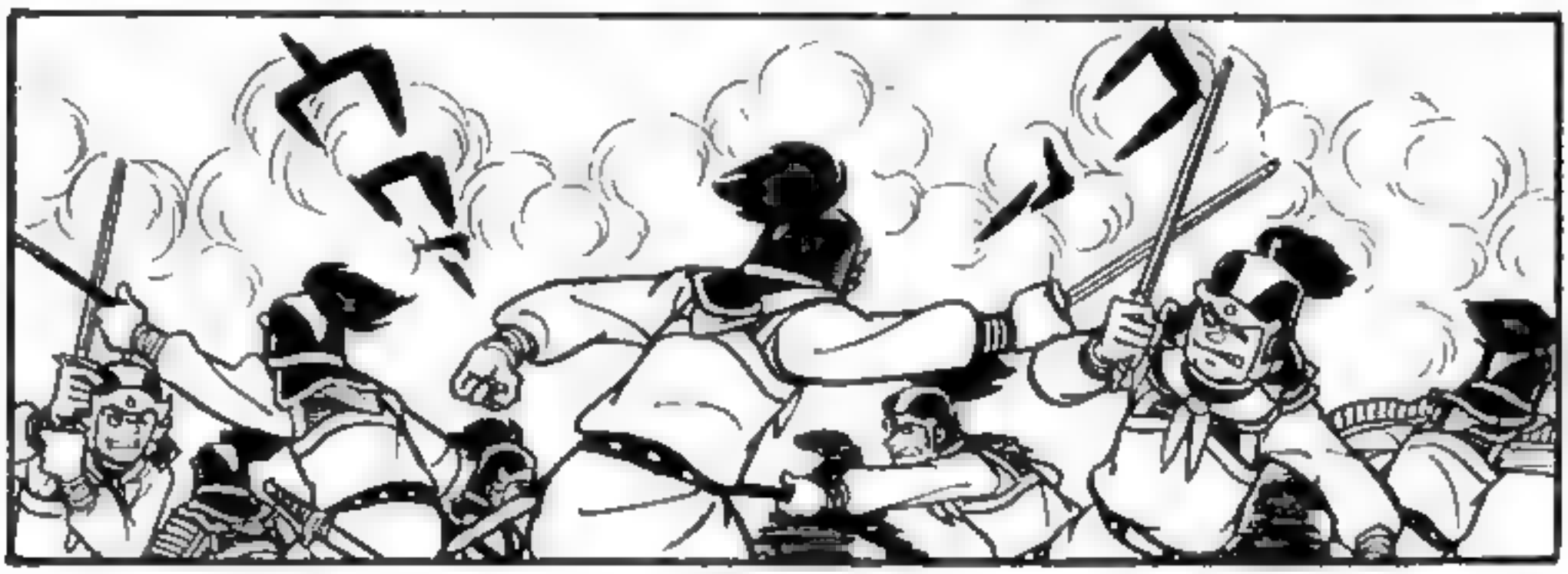
ALRIGHT MEN, LET US MEET THE REBELS HEAD ON!

CHARGE!

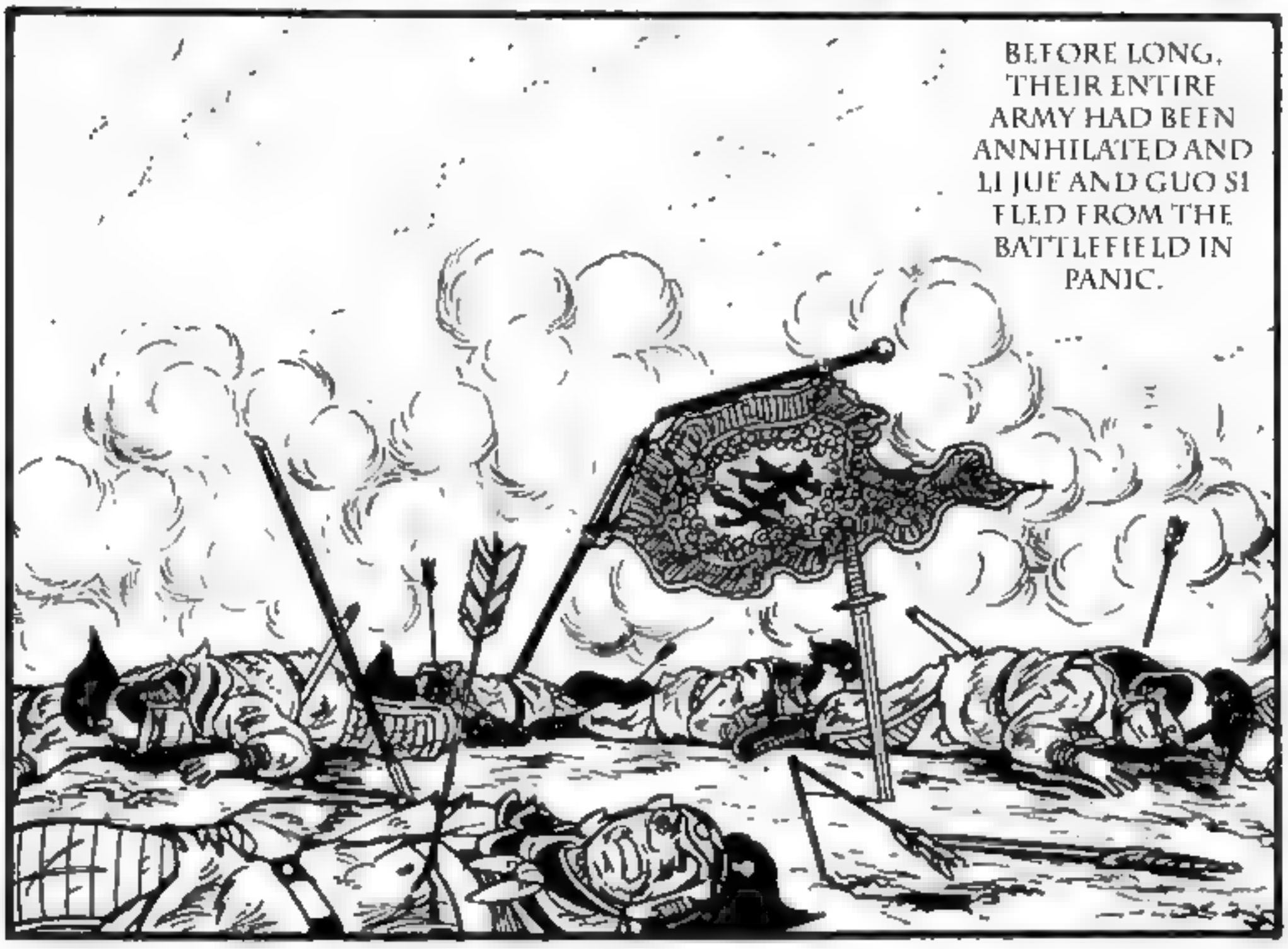


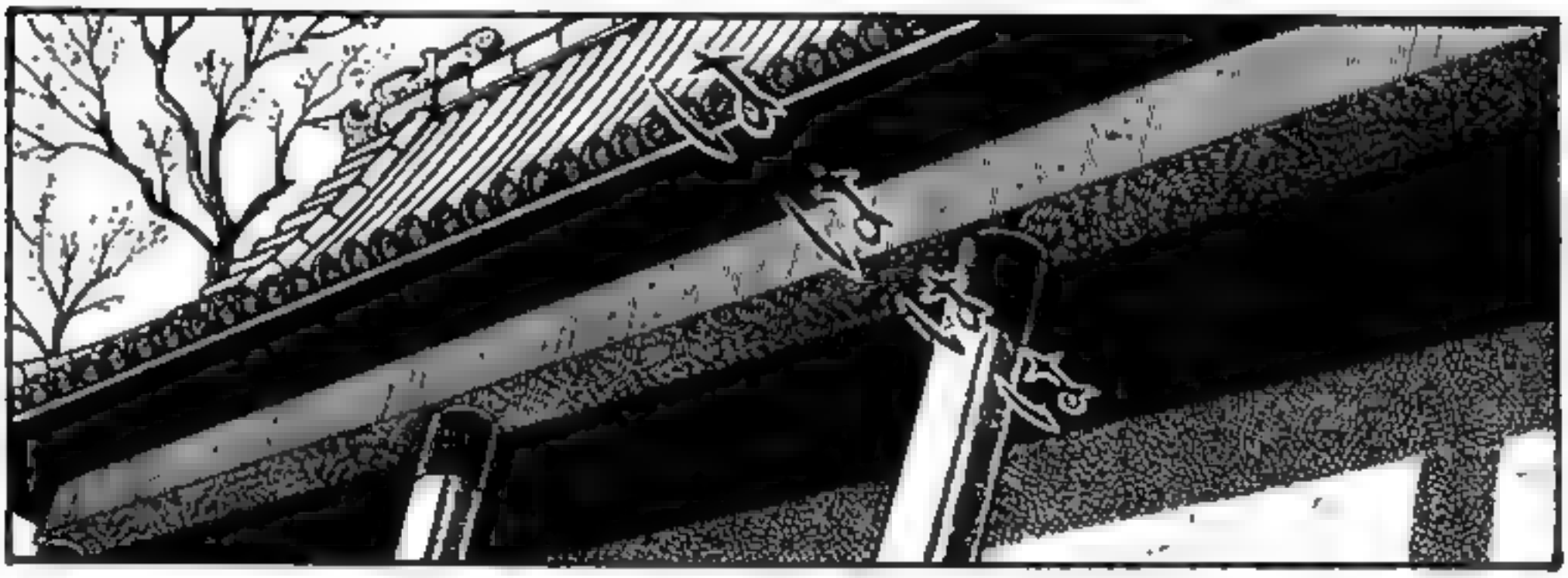
DON'T LEAVE A SINGLE REBEL ALIVE!

LET US SWEEP AWAY THESE PESTS OF CAO CAO!



THE COMBINED FORCES OF LI JUE AND GUO SI SUF FERED AN OVER- WHELMING DEFEAT AT THE HANDS OF CAO CAO'S ARMY


BEFORE LONG, THEIR ENTIRE ARMY HAD BEEN ANNHILATED AND LI JUE AND GUO SI FLED FROM THE BATTLEFIELD IN PANIC.



A MAGNIFICENT VICTORY YOU ACHIEVED TODAY, XU CHU!

I SHALL TREASURE IT, MY LORD.

TAKE THIS SWORD AS A REWARD.

I NEVER KNEW THAT THERE WERE STILL MEN FOOLISH ENOUGH TO DARE OPPPOSE OUR ARMY.

HA HA HA HA HA

NOW, LET US CELEBRATE TODAY'S GRAND VICTORY!

THOUGH IT IS TRUE THAT OUR ARMY IS THE STRONGEST AMONG THESE LANDS,

THAT IS NO LAUGHING MATTER.

TWO MEN ..?

THERE ARE STILL TWO MEN THAT I AM WARY OF.

I CANNOT JUST IGNORE THEM.

I AM REFERRING TO LIU BEI AND LU BU.

.....

THEY ARE BOTH FORMIDABLE MEN THAT I WILL SURELY COME ACROSS AGAINST IN THE FUTURE.

WHAT IS IT?
GOOD EVENING, MY LORD.

THE ASTROLOGER WISHES TO SPEAK TO SIR.

ALRIGHT, LET HIM IN.

VENUS OF THE METAL ELEMENT AND MARS OF THE FIRE ELEMENT ARE COMING CLOSE TOGETHER, THROWING THE ELEMENTS OUT OF PROPORTION. SOMETHING LIKE THIS HAPPENS ONLY ONCE OR TWICE EVERY THOUSAND YEARS.

ONCE THE AURA OF HAN FADES AWAY, I BELIEVE THE NEW EMPEROR WILL ARISE SOMWHERE AMONG THE REGIONS OF JIN AND WEI.

OUR HAN DYNASTY, SYMBOLIZED BY THE FIRE ELEMENT, IS GROWING WEAKER BY DAY AS IT IS ATTACKED BY THE ELEMENT OF EARTH.

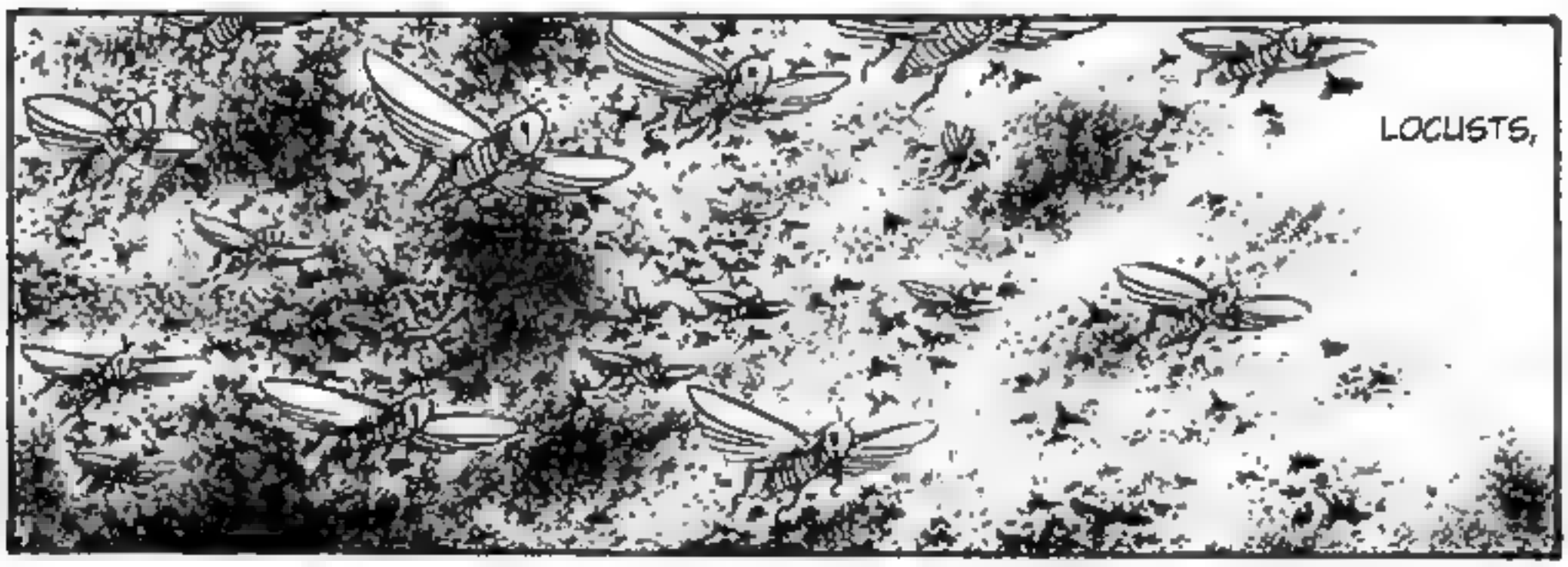
THANK YOU FOR TELLING ME. YOU MAY BE DISMISSED.

HUMANS CANNOT CHANGE THE WAYS OF HEAVEN AND NATURE.

WHAT DO YOU MAKE OF THAT?

FLOODS,

AND NO MATTER HOW HARD WE MAY STRUGGLE, WE HAVE ALWAYS BEEN AT MERCY TO THE WAYS OF NATURE.
WE HAVE LONG BEEN REPEATING THE SAME HISTORY OF FORGING NEW KINGDOMS AND DESTROYING OLD ONES.


LOCUSTS,

VIOLENT STORMS AND BLIZZARDS,

BUT TO OBSERVE HER MOVEMENTS AND ACT ACCORDINGLY WITH THEM.

AS SUCH, IT IS ONLY NATURAL THAT WE DO NOT TRY TO OPPOSE NATURE,

IN SHORT, WE ARE POWERLESS AGAINST MOTHER NATURE.

THE ELEMENT OF HAN IS FIRE, SYMBOLIZED BY MARS.

HMM...

THE MOVEMENTS OF THE STARS ARE JUST ANOTHER ONE OF NATURE'S MOVEMENTS. IT WOULD BE BEST FOR MY LORD TO KEEP IT WELL IN MIND.

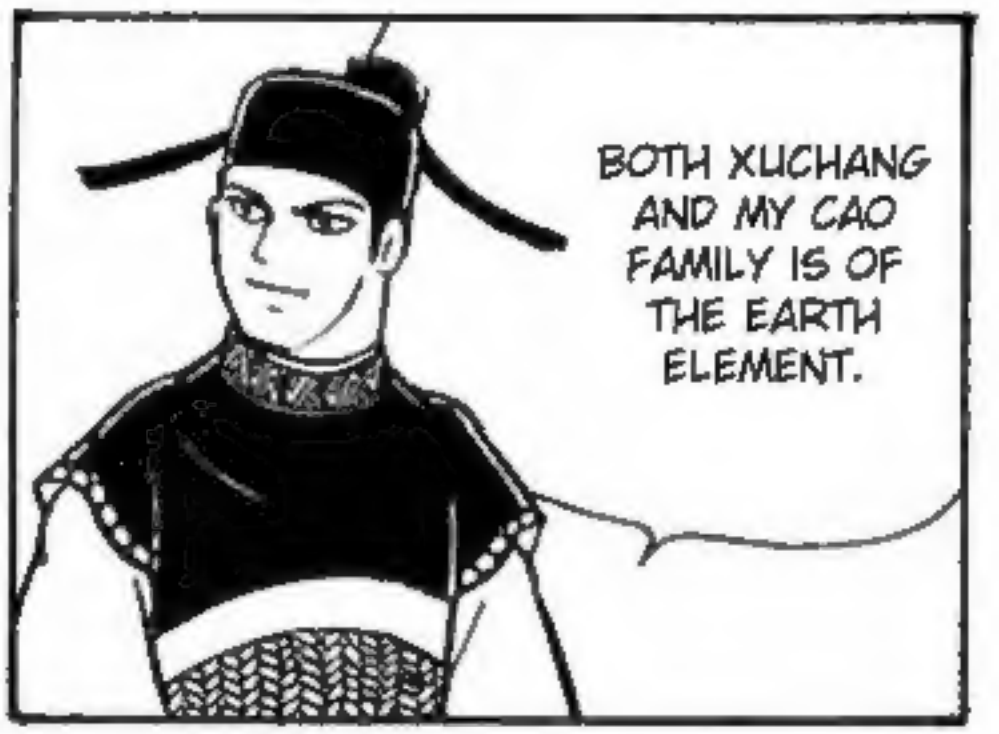
AND SIR IS BORN UNDER SATURN, WHICH DENOTES THE ELEMENT OF EARTH.

I HAVE BEEN THINKING OF RELOCATING THE CAPITAL TO XUCHANG.

?

THEN THIS MAY TRULY BE A SIGN FROM THE HEAVENS!

AH...!


BOTH XUCHANG AND MY CAO FAMILY IS OF THE EARTH ELEMENT.

YES.
IT MUST BE TRULY HEAVEN'S WILL!

AND I SHALL CONTINUE TO RISE!

I SHALL PROPOSE THE MOVE TO XUCHANG TO HIS HIGHNESS TOMORROW.

YES, YOUR HIGHNESS. LUOYANG IS STILL BUT A WASTELAND AND RESTORING IT SHALL BE A LONG AND ARDUOUS TASK. NOT ONLY IS IT INADEQUATE TO HOUSE YOUR HIGHNESS CURRENTLY, BUT THE PEOPLE'S HEARTS HAVE GROWN DISTANT FROM IT.

YOU MEAN TO RELOCATE THE CAPITAL AGAIN?

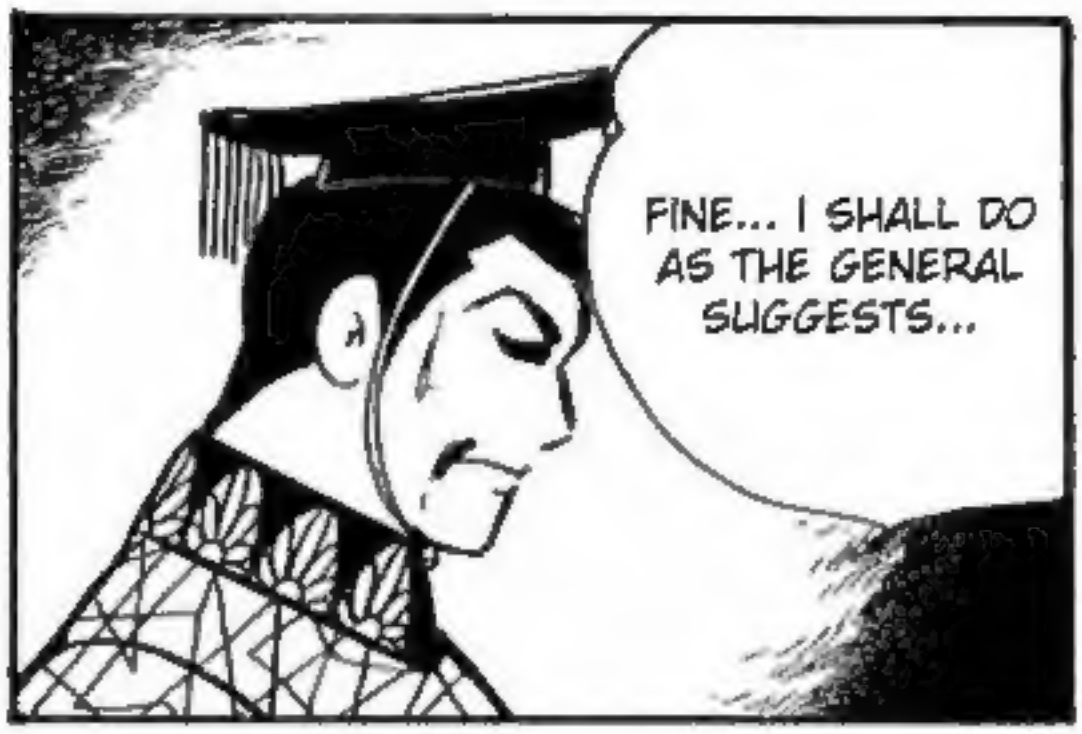
MOVE TO XUCHANG...!?

COMPARED TO THESE RUINS, XUCHANG IS A WEALTHY CITY WITH A PALACE AND FORTIFICATIONS ADEQUATE ENOUGH TO HOUSE YOUR HIGHNESS AND FEED THE PEOPLE WITH ITS BOUNTIFUL LANDS.

I SYMPATHIZE WITH YOUR HIGHNESS BUT ESTABLISHING A SECURE GOVERNMENT MUST BE PRIORITIZED IN THESE TROUBLED TIMES. FOR THAT, THE MOVE TO XUCHANG IS ABSOLUTELY NECCESSARY.

I DO NOT WISH TO MOVE IF POSSIBLE.

BUT THE HISTORY OF OUR HAN DYNASTY LIES HERE IN LUOYANG.



AND SO EMPEROR XIAN WAS FORCED TO PART WITH HIS HOME ONCE MORE AS THE CAPITAL OF HAN WAS RELOCATED TO XUCHANG.

TRANSLATED BY HOX

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